

# The Origin and Function of Culture

By

Géza Róheim, Ph. D.

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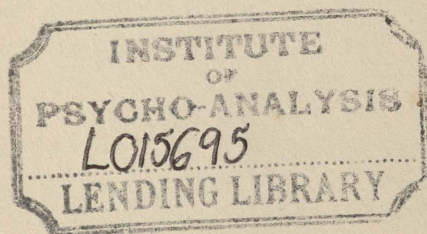








THE ORIGIN AND FUNCTION OF CULTURE







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# The Origin and Function of Culture

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GÉZA RÓHEIM, PH.D.

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## INTRODUCTION

The following three essays\* form a connected whole and are an attempt to explain civilization or culture as manifestation of the Eros. In his epoch-making book on *Civilization and its Discontents* Freud says:

"We can therefore set our minds at rest only if we say that the cultural process is the particular modification undergone by the life process under the influence of the task set before it by Eros and stimulated by Ananke, external necessity and this task is that of uniting human beings into a larger unity with libidinal attachments between them."<sup>1</sup> Freud's book is an explanation of why man is discontented in civilization while the present essays are an attempt to give an answer to the question as to how and why civilization originated.

Civilization or culture should be understood here in the sense of a possible minimum definition, that is, it includes, whatever is above the animal level in mankind. In sharp distinction to theories like Pareto's<sup>2</sup> *human history is here explained as based on Eros*. Whereas Eros of course is present in all living beings, in mankind, with its specific prolongation of immaturity the process takes specific forms and it is from these patterns that human culture emerges.

As we are by no means trying to give an exhaustive interpretation of the cultural process but only following one trend, a certain one-sidedness is unavoidable. Therefore I may as well state in so many words that I do not claim that *our prolonged infancy* is the only biological factor behind the cultural process. Also I fully admit that we have an inborn trend of maturation and in discussing the problem of growing up I am envisaging only one, viz., the regres-

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\*The first essay was published in *The Psychoanalytic Review*, Vol. 29, No. 2. (The title is now changed and one passage has been added.)

<sup>1</sup> S. Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 1930, 133.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. F. Alexander, *Our Age of Unreason*, 1942, Chapter V, 94.

sive aspect of the problem. It is of course quite clear that our economic destiny is conditioned by our environment but it is evident that human beings deal with this environment in a way that is specifically human. It is this *human way* that claims our attention. We have only tried to explain the trend that governs the whole system and therefore the points at which it breaks down, the problems of *aggression* whether introjected or projected do not concern us at present.

*New York, 1st May, 1943.*

THE AUTHOR



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#### ABBREVIATIONS

1. Am. Anthr.—American Anthropologist.
2. Journ. of Am. F. L.—Journal of American Folk Lore.
3. Int. Journ. of Psa.—International Journal of Psycho-Analysis.
4. Int. Z. f. Psa.—Internationale Zeitschrift für Psychoanalyse.
5. Journ. Roy. Anthr. Inst.—Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland.

## THE ORIGIN AND FUNCTION OF CULTURE





## CHAPTER ONE

# THE PROBLEM OF GROWING UP

### 1. INDIVIDUALS AND CULTURES

In 1912 Freud published a book, *Totem and Taboo*, wherein he shows that savages in certain cases act and think much like neurotics. They avoid certain things which are connected with certain other things and what in the case of an individual neurotic, might be called a peculiar idiosyncrasy in the case of primitive tribes is called a taboo and forms one of the pillars of their social system. They act in an irrational way; that is they have rites and magic which are similar to the activities of the compulsive neurotic. The sub-title of the book is: on certain correspondences between the savage and the neurotic. But, strictly speaking, the analogy is not between the savage and the neurotic, rather the analogy lies between savage *cultures* and the neurotic, between what the savage does in groups and what the neurotic does as an individual.

One way to arrive at an understanding of the nature of a primitive culture is by aiming at the individual who is in the hub of the whole system.

The typical representative of a Siberian tribe and the leader of the community is the shaman.

Shirokogoroff in his very thorough investigation of Tungus shamanism, tells us that:

Since the shaman functions as a safety valve and as a regulator of the psychic life of the clan he lives under the permanent feeling of bearing a great responsibility. . . . From the analysis of the relations between the shaman and his spirits, his own spirits and those of other shamans also his spirits and the complex of other spirits, we can see a great number of various prohibitions, avoidances, taboos, binding every step of the shaman. Even in his family, the shaman must be careful not to harm his wife if he is a male shaman, or her husband if she is a female, not to speak of the children. . . . The shaman's spirits which he carries with him may always become involved with other spirits and a continuous trouble may originate from their conflict. Owing to this the shaman is always careful when finding himself with other people. . . . The reaction of other people to the shaman responds to his cautious



behavior, so that very often the shaman becomes more or less isolated. . . . Finally there is a special condition more which deprives the shaman of the usual cheerfulness of the Tungus, viz. the worry about the soul.

The shaman being the safety valve of the clan and a clan officer cannot refuse to assist his clansmen.<sup>1</sup>

The inner force in the make up of the shaman which takes him to the heights of Heaven and the depths of Hell, naturally takes something away from this earth.

Owing to the psychomental character of shamanism, most of the shamans are put in an exceptional position in reference to the chief industrial activity of the Tungus: hunting. In fact in Transbaikalia I have met with a shaman who could not kill big animals, such as the elk and therefore was chiefly hunting roe deer. On his part it was a case of self-suggestion. Some shamans cannot hunt tigers and bears for these are animals whose forms may be assumed by other shamans. As the shamans are economically and physically in an inferior position they live with other people who take care of them as if they were invalids. Other people do the hunting for them, look after the domesticated animals and take care of the shamans.<sup>2</sup>

The influence of the shaman is clearly defined by the transference situation. "The person attended by a shaman must not seek assistance from other shamans unless the shaman recommends it himself. So that the shaman gradually forms around himself a group of permanent clients. Naturally the more numerous are his permanent clients from their childhood, the more influential is the shaman." There can be no doubt about the neurotic or psychotic character of shamans. We quote Bogoras on the Chukchee:

The shamanistic call begins to manifest itself at an early age, in many cases during the critical period of transition from childhood to youth. It is the period of rapid and intense growth; and it is well known that many persons of both sexes manifest during this time increased sensitiveness and that the mind often becomes unbalanced . . . Nervous and highly excitable temperaments are most susceptible to the shamanistic call. . . . The shamans among the Chukchee with whom I conversed were as a rule extremely excitable, almost hysterical and not a few of them were half crazy. Their cunning in the use of deceit in their art closely resembled the cunning of a lunatic.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> S. M. Shirokogoroff, *Psychomental Complex of the Tungus*, 1935, 380.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, l. c., 379.

<sup>3</sup> W. Bogoras, *The Chukchee*, Jesup North Pacific Expedition, VII, 1907, 415.



The next quotation shows the conflict and the struggle of the healthy part of the personality against the shamanistic "call."

Young people as a rule are exceedingly reluctant to obey the call especially if it involves the adoption of some characteristic device in clothing or in the mode of life.<sup>4</sup>

The process of gathering inspiration is so painful to young shamans because of their mental struggle against the call, that they are sometimes said to sweat blood on the forehead and temples. . . . Afterwards every preparation of a shaman for a performance is considered a sort of repetition of the initiative process: hence it is said that the Chukchee shamans during that time are easily susceptible to hemorrhage and even to bloody sweat. . . . The preparatory period is compared by the Chukchee to a long severe illness; and the acquirement of inspiration, to a recovery. To people of mature age the shamanistic call may come after some great misfortune or loss or illness indeed if somebody recovers after such a loss or illness he is regarded as having within himself the possibilities of a shaman.<sup>5</sup>

The shaman is certainly the representative of one type of civilization and there can be no doubt about the fact that he differs from ordinary men by being a neurotic of some sort. According to Czaplicka

Although hysteria lies at the bottom of the shaman's vocation, yet at the same time the shaman differs from an ordinary patient suffering from this illness in possessing an extremely great power of mastering himself in the periods between the actual fits, which occur during the ceremonies. A good shaman ought to possess many unusual qualities but the chief is the power, acquired by tact and knowledge, to influence the people around him.<sup>6</sup>

Siberian culture is a very typical case for here the neurotic nature of the Leader of the cultural area is evident.

It is not so in every culture area. In Central Australia nobody would regard the average "ngankara man" as a morbid person. Obviously this cannot be so because all the middle aged, all the important members of the tribe would be more or less introverts or neurotics as they are all medicine men. On the contrary they are

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<sup>4</sup> W. Bogoras, *l. c.*, 418, 419.

<sup>5</sup> W. Bogoras, *l. c.*, 421.

<sup>6</sup> M. A. Czaplicka, *Aboriginal Siberia*, 1914, 169.



usually capable and healthy men, skillful hunters and leaders in warfare. However further enquiry reveals other facts. This is the initiation dream of Wapiti, an old man of the Ngatatara tribe. He is a pleasant, gentlemanly sort of old man and nobody who knew him would call him a neurotic. Let us hear what he has to say about his own initiation:

The altjira Wapiti came to me in his dream and he held a yam in his hand. He thrust the yam into my nail and the nankara stone went right in from there. It spread right through my flesh and came out through the nails of the other hand.

He had to prepare for this dream by eating the yam (wapiti) that is, his own totem. Every time he ate it he felt a stitch inside till finally he was "made" by the altjira in the dream. When he woke up after this dream he was deranged and continually talking. He saw a stump and taking it to be a man, he said:

<i>Warkinji</i>	<i>wanka</i>	<i>kunjanga.</i>
<i>Scolding</i>	<i>talk</i>	<i>bad word!</i>

Which means that the imaginary person is saying something bad about him and he protests against this. "Bad words" means Central Australian swearing which usually contains some references to incest or the genital organs. One man was actually standing there but he saw two and said:

<i>Nana</i>	<i>paluna</i>	<i>wanti</i>
<i>That</i>	<i>him (i.e. the bad words)</i>	<i>leave it.</i>

After this he understood the words of the animals and knew what babies were laughing at when they play. He can see right through people even if they are standing in a crowd and he pulls the little bone or stick out and removes the disease.

Now the state in which we find him after the dream amounts to what might be called a transitory paranoia. But first we must understand his dream. In the conception dream of his mother it was the mythological Wapiti who penetrated into her womb in the shape of a tjurunga in order to reappear on earth as a new Wapiti. The would-be medicine man commences by eating his totem, that is, by the oral introjection of the father. In the case of the mother the tjurunga-ancestor penetrates *via* the cult-symbol into the womb, in



the case of the son he goes in in his eatable totemic form through the mouth. The dream itself is very similar to the conception dreams of women. We may therefore suspect a female attitude with regard to the father as latent in the mental make-up of the medicine man. The initiator is a supernatural father and double of Wapiti. When I asked him about the man whom he saw in two shapes in the delirium he told me it was his own father. Spencer and Gillen recount a similar case among the Warramunga. The future medicine man sees two spirits and when he has his spear poised and is ready to throw it, they say: "Don't kill us, we are your father and brother."<sup>7</sup>

I have analyzed the conception dreams of women in this area and shown that the latent content of these dreams is coitus with the father. This would fit in very well with the latent homosexual content of paranoia. Moreover if we remember that a Central Australian medicine man is continually seeing the phallic demons, regards himself as being persecuted by them or by other sorcerers, struggles with them and masters them by projecting (the characteristic mechanism of paranoia) invisible stones into the demons, sorcerers or patients, we must regard these people as dissimulating paranoiacs or as people with whom the paranoiac mechanisms have not resulted in breaking off relations with their environment. Only one of the many *nankara* men I knew in Central Australia was what might be termed peculiar or a paranoid character. My wife never quite lost her fear of Pukuti-wara because of his peculiar bearing, his fixed stare, and none too friendly manner. When we met him he had fled from the Pitchentara country with his followers because he had killed a man in a blood-feud. He was the only native I knew who showed anxiety in broad daylight. He used to stop short in the middle of a sentence and cry out "They are coming!" which meant either the *wanapa* (man on a blood-feud expedition) or the *mamu* (demons). His tribes-fellows regarded him as different from other sorcerers; he was not merely a *nankara*-man but half a *mamu* (demon) himself. If we look at this statement more closely it is equivalent to saying that he was half mad. Sometimes they would tell me about old women who had spoken incoherently in their

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<sup>7</sup> B. Spencer and F. J. Gillen, *Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, 1904, 482.



death agony and this was called mamuringu (to become a devil).<sup>8</sup> The difference between the dreams of Pukuti-wara and others was the unveiled symbolism in the former. While it is only analytic interpretation which can reveal the castration content in the dreams of other medicine men, he has really undergone the excision of one testicle at initiation.<sup>9</sup> We see therefore that Pukuti-wara, the most renowned of all the shamans, is really on the verge of normalcy while the others, less famous men, behave like all other people but make extensive use of psychotic mechanisms in their calling of medicine men. We know that among these tribes all adults are more or less medicine men.

Among the Yuma Indians, a tribe I worked with for two months in 1931, society is led by the medicine men who still maintain an effective counter-propaganda against the Missions and Christianity. Not only is the medicine man a dreamer but all achievements must be based on a dream. Nobody can be a good horseman or hunter, or warrior or anything before he has acquired these faculties through a dream. Shëmac chot = "dream good" means everything that is good luck. Shëmamek = "not dreamer" is very bad. The typical initiation dream of the medicine man is based on the primal scene and the cure itself seems to be an imitation of the father's mysterious and incomprehensible doings. The details of the interpretation are, however, not important, from the point of view of our present argument.<sup>10</sup> What we wish to show is that primitive civilizations are societies led by medicine men and that the medicine man is a neurotic who has succeeded in converting his neurosis into an activity in harmony with his interests. This situation is very well explained by the dream of an analysand (didactic analysis in Budapest) who is also a "medicine man" (*i.e.*, doctor).

I dreamt that I have inherited a blind (shutter) and I tell my wife that I am going to sell it for a lot of money. She has her doubts about this but I show her how to open spaces in between where one can see through the blind.

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<sup>8</sup> G. Róheim, "Women and Their Life in Central Australia," *Journ. Roy. Anthr. Inst.*, LXIII, 1933, 63, 242.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. G. Róheim, *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, 1934, 69.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. G. Róheim, "Psycho-Analysis of Primitive Cultural Types," *Int. Journ. of Psa.*, XIII, 185.



His mother always lets the blind down instead of pulling it up every morning. She is sorry for him; why get up so early, let him sleep a bit. He is anxious because his mother is developing the family disease, melancholia. Object loss, introjection and projection, are the latent elements of the situation. He will finish a scientific project which may bring him money. He has an inhibition in completing his scientific papers and ideas and his mother is constipated since the commencement of her melancholic phase. His blind spots are clearing up, he can see through the blinds and can sublimate his infantile sexual curiosity as insight and foresight. He is willing to accept reality and to forego the secondary gain of his mother's neurosis (selling the blinds).

His adaptation to reality was achieved, he fulfilled the intentions of the dream.

It is true of course that "a civilization is a mode of group living"<sup>11</sup> but we must add to this definition that when viewed from the outside, it is always a very peculiar mode. A rationalist might imagine that human beings living in a group, find a way to combine their energies in the struggle with the environment and that the most effective means are finally employed in this struggle. Variations of culture would in this case arise as variations in these means conditioned by a varying environment. But this is far from being true. What we really find is that human groups are actuated by diverse group ideals,<sup>12</sup> led on by dominant ideas,<sup>13</sup> which may be supremely important for them but incomprehensible or devoid of value for their neighbors. Ruth Benedict, after examining the cultures of Zuni, of Dobu and of the Kwakiutl says: "They have certain goals towards which their behavior is directed and which their institutions further. They differ from one another not only because one trait is present here and absent there and because one trait is found in two regions, in two different forms. They differ still more because they are oriented as wholes in different directions."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Margaret Mead, Review of "*The Riddle of the Sphinx*", *Character and Personality*, 1935, 90.

<sup>12</sup> G. Róheim, "Super-Ego and Group Ideal Primitive Cultural Types", *Int. Journ. of Psa.*, XIII, 1934.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Th. Benedek, "Dominant Ideas", *Int. Journ. of Psa.*, XVII, 1938, 40.

<sup>14</sup> R. Benedict, *Patterns of Culture*, 1935, 223.



In the preliminary report on my field work I tried to go beyond this and to show that these collective psychical system formations were organized as defense mechanisms against certain libidinal strivings and these again are dependent on the typical infantile situation of each area. In Central Australia the typical trauma is the alknarintja-situation, with the mother lying on the boy who is thus in close bodily contact with the mother but in the inverted or female situation. As a counter-cathexis to this situation we have phallic ceremonialism based on the exclusion of women and the projection of the mother in the person of the stranger, the "alknarintja" or "eyes turning away" woman. Yet the structure of the whole culture is revealed by the return of repressed elements. The tjurunga, the symbol of the penis, is ornamented by concentric circles and we find the same concentric circles on the ceremonial ground. They symbolize the womb. Subincision itself makes the matter quite clear, for we have a vagina actually cut into the penis. We can therefore distinguish the following phases of development: (A) The mother lies on the boy. Positive Œdipus desire, inverted situation. (B) Repression of (A) with the formulae "I do not desire the mother, I want to be on friendly terms with the father," and "I am not in the female situation, I have nothing to do with women, only with men," and (C) Return of the repressed elements (as indicated above).

In Normanby Island we find a matrilinear society with a maternal group ideal in the person of the *esaesa*, the chief, who distributes food and an infantile trauma coming from the father. It is the custom of Normanby Island fathers to take the child's genital organ into their mouths saying, "I eat, I bite off." The process of development can be reconstructed in some such stages as these: (1) The basic element is the child's wish: "I want to eat my mother"; (2) the anxiety equivalent of this wish is reinforced by the governing trauma in this society: "My father eats me." In other words the first formula becomes "My mother eats me" in phantasy and this is modified by actual practice into the formula "My father eats me."

The accumulation of libido and the anxiety tension become unbearable in this situation and give rise to the social formula, *i.e.*, that of the Super-ego, "There are no fathers, *i.e.*, no enemies only mothers," or somewhat less categorically, "You belong to the



mothers, not to the fathers." The pleasure gained by this formula is obvious: "There are no fathers, *i.e.*, people who will eat you, but only mothers, whom you can eat." But put in the second way the formula signifies a direction of ego development: "If you are a mother, you must let yourself be eaten, you must share yourself out at the feast." Here as with the natives of Australia, we see the governing infantile trauma returning from its repression, for every Papuan who distributes food is eaten by strangers, as he was by his father in the primordial period of infancy.<sup>15</sup>

What I suspect is, that if we had a really intimate analytic knowledge of all cultures it would be possible to prove something similar in every case, *viz.*, the dominant rôle of a specific infantile situation, infantile anxiety or libidinal trend.<sup>16</sup>

For instance in Northwest America we find a primitive society organized on the basis of snobbery.<sup>17</sup> We follow the description of their culture given by Ruth Benedict.

The tribes of the Northwest Coast had great possessions and these possessions were strictly owned. They were property in the sense of heirlooms, but heirlooms with them, were the basis of society. Besides property which was in any way connected with the means of livelihood there was other property owned in a different fashion.

Those things which were supremely valued, were prerogatives over and above material well-being. Many of these were material things, named house-posts and spoons and heraldic crests, but the greater number were immaterial possessions, names, myths, songs and privileges which were the great boast of a man of wealth.<sup>18</sup>

The right to a title had to be signalized by the distribution of great wealth. The women's engrossing occupation was not the household routine, but the making of great quantities of mats, baskets and cedar-bark blankets which were put aside in the valuable boxes made by the men for the same purpose. Men likewise accumulated canoes and the shells or dentalia they used as money. They had a complicated monetary system combined with high rates of interest and the status of the individual in the tribe depended on the potlatches he had given. A pot-

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<sup>15</sup> Quoted from G. Róheim, *Super-Ego and Group Ideal*, *l. c.*, 184.

<sup>16</sup> Similar plots in culture have since been revealed by M. Mead, Dr. A. Kardiner and others. I intend to discuss these in other papers.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. the interesting paper by A. M. Hocart, "Snobbery" in *Custom is King*, Essays presented to R. R. Marett, 1936, 157.

<sup>18</sup> R. Benedict, *l. c.*, 182, 183.



latch is, like the Melanesian sagari, a distribution of property but with a strong destructive-aggressive tendency.

The ultimate reason why a man of the Northwest Coast cared about the nobility titles, the wealth, the crests and the prerogatives lays bare the mainspring of their culture; they used them in a contest in which they sought to shame their rivals. Each individual according to his means, constantly vied with all others to outdistance them in distributions of property. The boy who had just received the first gift of property selected another youth to receive a gift from him. The youth he chose could not refuse without admitting defeat at the outset, and he was compelled to cap the gift with an equal amount of property. When the time came for repayment if he had not double the original gift to return as interest he was shamed and demoted and his rival's prestige correspondingly enhanced.<sup>19</sup>

The rivalry between chiefs and clans finds its strongest expression in the destruction of property. A chief will burn blankets, a canoe, or break a copper, thus indicating his disregard for the amount of property destroyed and showing that his mind is stronger, his power greater, than that of his rival. If the latter is not able to destroy an equal amount of property without much delay, his name is "broken". He is vanquished by his rival and his influence with his tribe is lost, while the name of the other chief gains correspondingly in renown.<sup>20</sup>

The object of all Kwakiutl enterprise is to show oneself superior to one's rivals. This will to superiority they exhibited in the most uninhibited fashion. It found expression in uncensored self-glorification and ridicule of all comers. Judged by the standards of other cultures the speeches of their chiefs at their potlatches are unabashed megalomania.

*I am the great chief who makes people ashamed.*

*I am the great chief who makes people ashamed.*

*Our chief brings shame to the faces,*

*Our chief brings jealousy to the faces.*

*Our chief makes people cover their faces by what he is  
continually doing in this world.*

*Giving again and again oil feasts to all the tribes.*<sup>21</sup>

We know too little about the individual lives of the people who lived in this culture which has now passed away to be able to analyze its structure with the degree of probability attained in Central

<sup>19</sup> R. Benedict, *l. c.*, 189. Cf., also G. P. Murdock, *Rank and Potlatch among the Haida*, Yale University Publications in Anthropology, 13, 1936.

<sup>20</sup> F. Boas, *The Social Organization and the Secret Societies of the Kwakiutl Indians*, Report of the National Museum, 1895, 353, 354.

<sup>21</sup> R. Benedict, *l. c.*, 190.



Australia or Normanby Island. But there can be no doubt about the obsessive<sup>22</sup> nature of these festival distributions and since we have to do with an obsession we are certainly justified in discussing it with the same method that we apply clinically to individual obsessions. The food-distribution and competition looks like what I have called in Melanesia narcissistic or retributive capitalism<sup>23</sup> and at any rate we may presume that phantasies about the excrements are hidden behind this obsession. In one of the folk-lore themes of this area we have the story of competitive food distribution and of the shame suffered by the vanquished party.

A small bird invites all the animals to a great feast. Then he pulls mountain goats' fat out of his rectum with a hook and feeds them all. Raven boasts, "I can do the same." But when he tries only blood comes out of his intestines and he is put to shame before the guests.<sup>24</sup>

In another version the would-be imitator sits on the kettle but he fills it with excrements instead of berries.<sup>25</sup> In a Blue Jay version of the same theme, however (Chinook), the difference between the successful host and his imitator is rather that the wound endured by the former is followed by regeneration, but in the case of the latter it is really a wound.

The Bear heated stones. Blue-Jay said to his sister: What may he give us to eat, Joi? When the stones were hot the Bear sharpened his knife and cut his feet (all around the sole) and cut his thigh. Then he rubbed over the wounds and they were healed. When Blue-Jay tried to imitate him, he fainted right away. Similar episodes follow in which Blue-Jay is always worsted. Finally he goes down to the shadows and becomes invisible himself. His sister pulled his penis till he cried "It hurts me."<sup>26</sup>

The snobbistic social tendency is always connected with a sense of inferiority and the real significance of belonging to a certain club or to the nobility or to a certain class of people is the over-compensation of a sense of inferiority. "I can't be worthless, feeble, etc., since I own a motor-car or since I am a count, etc." In nearly every

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<sup>22</sup> Cf. R. Benedict, *l. c.*, 193.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. G. Róheim, *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, 1934, 161.

<sup>24</sup> F. Boas, *Indianische Sagen von der Nord-Pacifischen Kuste Amerikas*, 1895, 76.

<sup>25</sup> F. Boas, *l. c.*, 176; cf., *l. c.*, 106, 245.

<sup>26</sup> F. Boas, *Chinook Texts*, Bureau of Ethnology, 1894, 180-182.



analysis we see how this sense of inferiority is connected on the one hand with the attitude of the child to its parents (Œdipus Complex) and on the other with the castration complex, with the fear of losing or of having already lost the penis, or sexual potency. The Viennese joke of pre-war times (1910) illustrates the point. A woman meets her friend and says: "Just think what has happened! My husband has become impotent!" The other replies: "You don't say so! Is that more than aulic councillor?"<sup>27</sup> We also know how closely castration anxiety is connected with a feeling of shame and the aim of the feast-contest is to put the other to shame. In the Blue-Jay story, defeat, shame and the wound (castration) are equivalent.

We should therefore have to assume a specially accentuated castration anxiety over-compensated by boasting and competitions. We know very little about the sexual life of these tribes but there is one important detail which confirms this conjecture.

The final exorcism (of the cannibal spirit in his ecstasy) was that which was performed with menstrual blood. For the final exorcism of the cannibal, therefore, the priest took cedar bark upon which was the menstrual blood of four women of the highest rank and smoked the face of the cannibal. Upon the Northwest Coast, menstrual blood was polluting to a degree hardly excelled in the world. Women were secluded during this period, and their presence rendered any shamanistic practice impotent. Deaths which occurred in spite of shamanistic cures were regularly laid to the unsuspected presence in the house of cedar bark upon which there was a trace of menstrual blood.<sup>28</sup>

"A menstruant woman is the only thing that will enfeeble the power of the shaman's spirit." In old times whenever a menstruant woman said anything it had to be obeyed.<sup>29</sup> In one of the Kwakiutl tales when the people wished to kill somebody who teased them he was made to drink menstrual blood of a woman.<sup>30</sup>

We might therefore conjecture a specially accentuated oral-

<sup>27</sup> A title given by the Austrian Emperor.

<sup>28</sup> R. Benedict, *l. c.*, 180; cf., F. Boas, *Chinook Texts*, 1894, 246, 247.

<sup>29</sup> John R. Swanton, *Tlingit Myths and Texts*, Bureau of American Ethnology, 39, 1909, 113.

<sup>30</sup> F. Boas, *Kwakiutl Tales*, Columbia University Contributions to Anthropology, II, 1910, 113.



sadistic cannibalistic trend,<sup>31</sup> represented by the opposite aspect in the feasts (giving food) but nevertheless manifesting its original destructive trend in the same ritual. The *talio* anxiety of castration would correspond to the original strength of the aggression and appears in a specific displacement as menstruation anxiety.<sup>32</sup>

In short, every civilization has certain *dominant ideas* of its own, and these dominant ideas may sometimes be called sublimated addictions. The case of the Tarahumare, a culture actually based to a certain degree on an addiction, illustrates the point. Several varieties of Cacti are called hikuli by the Tarahumare.

The plant, when taken, exhilarates the human system and allays all feeling of hunger and thirst. It also produces color visions. When fresh, it has a nauseating, slightly sour taste, but it is wonderfully refreshing when one has been exposed to great fatigue.<sup>33</sup>

The effect of the plant is so much enjoyed by the Tarahumares that they attribute to it power to give health and long life and to purify body and soul. . . . Moreover hikuli is a powerful protector of its people under all circumstances and it gives luck. If a man carries some hikuli in his belt, the bear cannot bite him and the deer cannot run away but become quite tame and can easily be killed. Should he meet Apaches, hikuli would prevent them from firing off their guns at him. . . . Hikuli is the great safeguard against witchcraft. It sees even better than the shamans and it watches that nothing bad is put into the food. . . . Hikuli purifies any man who is willing to sacrifice a sheep and to make native beer.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Cf., the songs of the Cannibal society in which "eating living men" and "eating wealth" is equated by Boas, *Secret Societies*, 459, and the egocentric (infantile omnipotence) attitude of the cannibal "I am at the center of the world," "I am at the post of the world," "You will be known all over the world," 457, 459.

<sup>32</sup> Cf., Daly, "Der Kern des Ödipus-Komplexes," *Imago*, XXI, 165, and previously in *Imago*, XIII, and XIV. The unequal distribution of menstruation taboos and anxiety among the various races of mankind would rather support a view according to which the menstruation anxiety is a specific variant of the general castration and vaginal anxiety. North West America is also the home of the menstruation blood (= red paint) and incest, and the *vagina dentata* motive. For the former, cf., G. Röheim, "Die Sedna Sage," *Imago*, X, 168. Note 5 for the latter, cf., R. H. Lowie, "The Test Theme in North American Mythology," *Journ. of Am. F. L.*, XXI, 97; Boas, *Indianische Sagen*, 24, 30, 66; Boas, *Kwakiutl Tales*, 171; John R. Swanton, *Tlingit Myths*, 81. Perhaps, however, the myth of the girl who had intercourse with her brother or her father's dog and painted him with red paint should be interpreted with Daly as showing the original attractiveness of the menstrual blood.

<sup>33</sup> C. Lumholtz, *Unknown Mexico*, 1903, I, 358.

<sup>34</sup> C. Lumholtz, *l. c.*, I, 360.



Hikuli therefore is a general safeguard against anxiety. The plants are dressed up in blankets and cigarettes are placed before them as sacrifices. Boys must never touch hikuli and women only when acting as the shaman's assistants in grinding it. It is not necessary to describe the details of the cult, the drinking of hikuli and the dance here. One taboo, however, is important.

Hikuli is not kept in the house because it is extremely virtuous<sup>35</sup> and might become offended at anything immodest. It is placed in a special jar or basket, in a separate store-house and is never taken out until tesvino and meat are offered to it. If this were neglected it would eat the Indian's soul.<sup>36</sup> Now as a matter of fact the plant actually does temporarily take away all sexual desire.<sup>37</sup> From this quality it follows that the plant is virtuous and being virtuous it is a "cultural value"<sup>38</sup> and a safeguard against anxiety. This is a particularly clear case of cultural elements as defences against instinctual urges. A phantasy on the inversion of the sexes is involved in the defence-mechanism for the women who help in preparing the plant for the drink are called *rokoro* which means the stamen of the flower while the shaman is the pistil.<sup>39</sup> But that the taboo on intercourse in the presence of the hikuli is not merely due to the actual qualities of the plant, is shown by parallel cases. Thus among the Masai when honey-wine is brewed a man and a woman are selected for the purpose neither of whom has had intercourse for two days.

In old Mexico the men who prepared *Pulque* should abstain from women for four days previously and the women engaged in brewing beer among the Kachins had to live in almost vestal seclusion.<sup>40</sup> Drinking together is a "socialized" addiction, it is one of the formative elements of social life. Similar elements are built up on deflected libido, on forepleasure without discharge, or, going one step further, on the *infantile situation*. The analysis of addictions shows that the substance swallowed, the object of the craving, is a substitute for the mother's milk and the Dayaks of South East Borneo figure palm wine as "milk flowing from the tree as if from a woman."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Rubio, the hikuli shaman, is described as a very virtuous man, *ibid.*, 376.

<sup>36</sup> C. Lumholtz, *l. c.*, I, 361.

<sup>37</sup> C. Lumholtz, *l. c.*, I, 359.

<sup>38</sup> "Hikuli is not as great as Father Sun, but sits next to him. It is the brother of Tata Dios; and the greatest hikuli is his twin brother," C. Lumholtz, *l. c.*, 360.

<sup>39</sup> C. Lumholtz, *l. c.*, I, 364.

<sup>40</sup> E. Crawley, *Dress, Drinks and Drums*, 1931, 195, 196.

<sup>41</sup> E. Crawley, *l. c.*, 195, quoting A. C. Kruijt, *Het Animisme in dem Indischen Archipel*, 1906, 150.



## 2. DELAYED INFANCY

Since I returned from field work, I have, in several publications put forward the theory that culture is due to retardation, that is to a slowing down of the process of growth to a prolongation of the infantile situation. In *The Riddle of the Sphinx* I tried to show how some primitive cultures, which I have studied in the field, originated as defense mechanisms against certain libidinal dangers of specific infantile situations. From the point of view of the anthropologist *culture means mankind* because even the most elementary conditions of human existence such as the use of fire, of tools or language itself must be regarded as the beginnings of culture. Thus the problems of the origin of culture and of the origin of mankind, of the specific features, of the human species are really only one problem. I came to the conclusion that just as the living men whom we actually know owe their character formation or their neurosis to the infantile situation, and just as variations in culture are due to variations in the infantile situation, the great variation known as mankind must be due to the same cause. As a matter of fact we know that the outstanding difference between man and his animal brethren consists in the infantile morphological characters of human beings, in the prolongation of infancy. This prolonged infancy explains the traumatic character of sexual experiences which do not produce the like effect in our simian brethren or cousins, and the existence of the Œdipus Complex itself which is partly a conflict between archaic and recent love objects. Finally the defense mechanisms themselves owe their existence to the fact that our Soma (Ego) is even more retarded than the Germa (Id) and hence the immature Ego evolves defense mechanisms as a protection against libidinal quantities which it is not prepared to deal with. Working on different lines G. Bally arrives at similar conclusions.<sup>42</sup>

Among lower animals such as insects the motor process is rigid, undifferentiated. A species of solitary wasp invariably stings the ventral ganglion of its only prey and nourishment, the golden beetle

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<sup>42</sup> G. Bally, "Die frühkindliche Motorik im Vergleich mit der Motorik der Tiere," *Imago*, XIX, quoted by me in *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, 256-262.



larva. This precision is not acquired by practice—it is a biological quality inherent in the wasp. Among higher animals the introductory phases of a series of movements are subject to variations and only the portion of the motor process which is in immediate touch with the object (eating, coitus) remains rigid. These are animals with a prolonged infancy, with whom parental care replaces reality at the outset of life. Thus aggressive activity inherited as a means of survival in the struggle with reality, now survives as an aimless pseudo-activity, as play, or as a struggle with the parents as pseudo-antagonists. In play mankind develops a kind of activity in which cathexis is displaced from the aim to the function, from satisfaction to endless repetition. This is how mankind evolves a reality principle, *i.e.*, the capacity to bear a delay in wish-fulfilment. The process of retardation has made a break in the original biological adaptation to environment. The specifically human duality, the contrast between Ego and Id, has its roots in retardation.<sup>43</sup>

The theory of retardation is also put forward from another point of view by Robert Briffault.

It will be seen at a glance that a marked and uniform increase in the duration of gestation takes place as we advance from the lower to the higher type of mammals. . . . The prolongation of gestation is related to the advance in the qualities of the organism, in its degree of organization.<sup>44</sup>

It has been seen that the power of nutrition and of reproduction decrease in the cell in proportion to the degree of fixation of its reactions, that is, in proportion to its differentiation and specialization. . . . The higher the degree of specialized organization and differentiation which the cells of the developing being have to attain, the slower the rate of growth. Hence it is that the higher we proceed in the scale of mammalian evolution, the longer is the time devoted to gestation.<sup>45</sup>

Even more important is the fact that, although the time of gestation is thus lengthened, the rate of individual development becomes slower as we rise in the scale of organization and the young are brought into the world in a condition of greater immaturity.<sup>46</sup>

One specific feature of development is of fundamental impor-

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<sup>43</sup> Cf., also the remark of K. Landauer, "Die Affekte und ihre Entwicklung," *Imago*, XXII, 289, note 6.

<sup>44</sup> R. Briffault, *The Mothers*, I, 1927, 96.

<sup>45</sup> R. Briffault, *l. c.*, I, 98.

<sup>46</sup> R. Briffault, *l. c.*, I, 99.



tance for the psychologist. "I have found," says Dr. Below, "that among animals that bring forth their young in a condition of helplessness, such as man, the dog, cat, rat, mouse, and rabbit, the development of ganglion cells is incomplete at the time of birth and even soon after, whereas the horse, calf, sheep, and guinea pig show completely developed ganglion cells in every part of the brain almost always in the earlier periods of fetal life, invariably after birth."<sup>47</sup>

The incomplete development is much more pronounced in the human baby than in any other young, the process of the pyramidal cells in the frontal cortex have only one-quarter of their full development at the sixth month of intrauterine life, and only one-half at birth.<sup>48</sup>

In a non-retarded species everything depends on inheritance and the importance of ontogenesis increases with the degree of retardation.

The brain structure is, to be sure, determined to a large extent by dispositions inherited from a long line of ancestry; but those inherited impulses cannot have it all their own way. Their action is counteracted, deflected, modified by that of the experience which comes pouring in at every second.<sup>49</sup>

Briffault explains man's social instincts, the importance of the word, the logos from the child-mother situation. Although I agree with him in the starting point of his deductions I cannot follow his sociological argument. The triangular family with father-mother and child must be placed at the commencement of human evolution, while Briffault pictures primitive human society based exclusively on the child-mother situation. In a very brilliant, highly suggestive book, which nevertheless is full of "blind spots," oversights and positive mistakes,<sup>50</sup> Dr. Suttie gives us his views on the origins of love and hate and explains both on the basis of retardation.

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<sup>47</sup> E. Below, "Die Ganglienzellen des Gehirnes bei verschiedenen neugeborenen Tieren," *Archiv für Anatomie und Physiologie*, 1888, 188.

<sup>48</sup> R. Briffault, *l. c.*, I, 102.

<sup>49</sup> R. Briffault, *l. c.*, I, 103.

<sup>50</sup> For a prophet of love, Dr. Suttie shows a singular amount of hate. To accuse Freud of being a follower of Hitler (p. 234) is somewhat surprising. It was Freud, not Rank, who first connected birth and anxiety (p. 236). As the author has the



The social disposition seems to be a modified continuance of the infant's need for the nurtural parent's presence even when the material need is outgrown (p. 15).

Besides various forerunners partly quoted by Briffault the main exponent of the biological nature of man as determined by retardation is Professor Bolk. Bolk regards orthognathia, hairlessness, absence of pigmentation, the form of the ear, mongoloid feature, the central position of the foramen magnum, the greater weight of the brain, persistence of cranial sutures, the female labia majora, etc., as infantile or fetal features which appear as temporary characteristics in other primates but become stabilized in the human species.<sup>51</sup> Retardation is due to a modification in the endocrine system.<sup>52</sup> This aspect of the question is discussed in a recent publication which with a boldness seldom surpassed traces the ultimate causes of human phenomena through psychology and the endocrines to the minerals available in the soil. "Lack of any structural material would seem in the long run likely also to result in a slow rate of

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unfortunate habit of not giving references, I had no idea as to when and where I was "surprised that the penis is not a weapon" (p. 72). Finally I managed to find the passage in one of my publications "Psychoanalysis of Primitive Cultural Types," *Int. Journ. of Psa.*, XIII, 221, where I say the exact opposite of what Dr. Suttie makes me say. To put it mildly, this is an unfair method of argument.

Although the author knows very well that a considerable part of psychoanalytical literature deals with the preoedipal phase of development he persists in representing himself as the inventor of this phase (*cf.* p. 137). He utterly ignores the evidence for the destructive trends in the infant (Melanie Klein). To say that the Aranda tribe asserts that men can bear children is not true (p. 225). Old Yirramba once went as far as this in his defence of the orthodox doctrine, but this is very far from being a belief of the Aranda. Like certain matrilinear people Dr. Suttie is led by fiction that there are no fathers. The infant is born with only one instinct, that of "attachment to mother" while terror and rage originate when this instinct is thwarted. "Play, cooperation, competition and culture-interests generally are substitutes for the mutually caressing relation of child and mother," (p. 16). "For all our language, cultural achievement and our family life, our love need is still seeking new techniques of social relationship" (p. 20). Practically Suttie stresses the "attachment" of child to mother in the same way as Hermann, but while Hermann regards this as an aspect of the libindinal impulse (*Int. Z. für Psa.*, XXII, 1936, 349-370) for Suttie "love" is something independent of the libido. According to Suttie the child wakes up to life with a germ of parenthood with the impulse to "give" and to "respond" already in it (p. 58). "Any inhibition upon giving is probably the outcome of frustration and anxiety" (p. 58). Suttie, *The Origins of Love and Hate*, 1935.

<sup>51</sup> L. Bolk, *Das Problem des Menschwerdung*, 1926, 6, 7.

<sup>52</sup> L. Bolk, *l.c.*, 14.



growth." "Lime deficiency is thus thought to encourage femininity, and iodine shortage to favor fetalization. Yet since many of the aspects of youth and femininity are similar, it will not be easy to distinguish between the two possible causes of a similar state."<sup>53</sup> The book piles idea upon idea and as I am not competent to judge the validity of these conjectures I must refrain from following the arguments of the author. All that matters in this connection, however, is that various authors have attempted to derive human characteristics, both biological and sociological (cultural), from the prolongation of human infancy, *i.e.*, from retardation. Zuckerman, although criticizing the details of the argument put forward by Bolk and some of his followers, accepts *fetalization* or *paedomorphosis* as one of the processes whereby human characteristics have emerged in evolution.<sup>54</sup>

Other authors have also emphasized the importance of our delayed infancy in understanding mankind but in a different sense. These authors point out that in consequence of our delayed infancy mankind is open to all sorts of conditioning,<sup>55</sup> from which one would gather with a slight exaggeration that almost anything might happen to mankind. However, certain things typically do happen and in this and other publications I shall try to explain not how human beings with a delayed infancy react to certain institutions, but how the institutions themselves are conditioned by our permanent infantilism. As Gesell puts it

The child is not a creature of circumstance. He is a part and parcel of the great stream of life. He is biologically father of the man. And the infant is father of the child. Adulthood is not added unto infancy; it inheres in infancy.<sup>56</sup>

Now the point I wish to stress is this: According to the consensus of various analysts and to my own clinical experience neurosis is also due to retardation. Instead of cathecting the present the neurotic is fixated to the past. His real opponents in life are merely

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<sup>53</sup> J. R. de la H. Marett, *Race, Sex and Environment*, 1936, 23.

<sup>54</sup> S. Zuckerman, "Hormones and Evolution," *Man*, XXXVI, 134.

<sup>55</sup> A. Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*, 1939; R. Linton, *The Study of Man*, 1936, 78.

<sup>56</sup> A. Gesell, *Infancy and Human Growth*, 1929, 398.



dummies of the father of his infancy and the women he is in love with stand for the beloved mother. Present situations are distorted because they appear as mere replica of the past and the whole disease is an anachronism.

At the fourteenth analytic congress at Marienbad a symposium was held on the "Theory of Therapeutic Results." According to Bergler the child and the neurotic desire the coöperation of the parents in the sex-gratification.<sup>57</sup> Nunberg, following Freud, describes therapy as reanimating the past and making it possible to compare it with the present.<sup>58</sup> This is very similar to the description of the psychoanalytic cure given by Dr. Suttie.

First the aim of cathartic treatment might be expressed by this imaginary verbal reassurance by the physician to the patient: these evil thoughts and wishes are not really bad after all. Sex is only bad for children; that is why it is hidden by adults from them. Now you are grown up and permitted to wish these things. We might name this type of therapy "initiation."<sup>59</sup>

The patients often compare analysis to an initiation or the process of being analyzed to the process of growing up. Strachey said "The neurotics libidinal development is held up at some earlier stage."<sup>60</sup>

We shall not be surprised if we find that all this has been stated by Freud. In "Hemmung, Symptom und Angst" (1926) Freud says:

Yet, this is how neurotics behave. Although in their mental apparatus they have long since developed all the agencies necessary for dealing with a wide range of stimuli, although they are mature enough to be able to gratify the greater part of their needs themselves, although they know perfectly well that castration is no longer practiced as a punish-

<sup>57</sup> E. Bergler, "Zur Theorie der therapeutischen Resultate der Psychoanalyse," *Int. Z. für Psa.*, XXIII, 8; E. Bergler, "Therapeutic Results of Psychoanalysis," *Int. Journ. of Psa.*, XVIII, 1937, 148; Jekels und Bergler, "Übertragung und Liebe," *Imago*, XX.

<sup>58</sup> H. Nunberg, "Beiträge zur Theorie der Therapie," *Int. Z. für Psa.*, XXIII, 65.

<sup>59</sup> Suttie, *l. c.*, 65.

<sup>60</sup> J. Strachey, "Therapeutic Results of Psychoanalysis," *Int. Journ. of Psa.*, XVIII, 1937, 140. Cf. also O. Fenichel, "Therapeutic Results of Psychoanalysis," *l. c.*, 136.



ment, they nevertheless behave as if the old danger situation still existed, they remain under the spell of the old causes of anxiety.<sup>61</sup>

Freud discusses the fact that many people remain infantile in their attitude to danger and can not overcome obsolete conditions of anxiety, "to dispute this, would be to deny the existence of neurosis because it is precisely these people whom we call neurotics" (p. 99).

Three factors are responsible for neurosis, a biological, a phylogenetic and a psychological factor. The biological factor is the protracted helplessness and dependence of the human infant. The intrauterine period is relatively too short as compared to most animals; human beings are born in an unfinished state. This means that the influence of environment, of reality, is stronger and results in an early differentiation of the Id and the Ego, in increasing the dangers that threaten the Id from environment and in increasing the value of the object. For it is only from the object (the mother) that the infant can obtain protection against the dangers of a strange world and a prolongation of the intrauterine period of life. This biological factor is the basis of the primary danger situations it creates, the desire to be beloved, a desire which human beings can never give up.

The second phylogenetic factor according to Freud is the existence of a latency period. Something must have happened in the past history of the race which left its traces in the interrupted development of sexuality.

The pathogenic importance of this phenomenon accrues from the fact that most of the instinctual demands of this infantile sexuality are treated as dangers and guarded against by the Ego, so that the sexual impulses of puberty which should be Ego-compatible are in danger of succumbing to the attraction exerted by their infantile prototypes and of following them into repression.

The third or psychological factor is due to an imperfection of our psychical apparatus. This imperfection again is connected with the differentiation into an Id and an Ego, that is, with the influence

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<sup>61</sup> S. Freud, "Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, V, 418. (*Henmung, Symptom und Angst*, 1926, 97-111.)



of Environment. Reality compels the Ego to an attitude of defense against certain urges, to regard them as dangers. But as the Ego is itself intimately bound up with and derived from the Id the solution of this conflict between Environment and Id results in all those difficulties which we call neurosis.<sup>62</sup>

There is little to add to this. The second or phylogenetic factor appears to be but a special case of the first, of the delay of maturation. As Freud explains the differentiation of Ego and Id by reference to retardation this amounts to the view that neurosis, but also that human nature in general (*i.e.*, culture) is due to retardation. In *The Riddle of the Sphinx* I discussed human evolution from the point of view of sexuality as a danger while in another connection I shall discuss the effects of the phantasy prolongation of the intra-uterine situation and the eternal desire of human beings for love.

As the structural and fundamental identity of neurosis and civilization was so very evident to me I was rather surprised to notice that some psychoanalysts do not agree with me on this point.<sup>63</sup> Therefore I found it necessary to state my position clearly, to revise it if necessary and to give my psychoanalytical critics an opportunity to criticize the details of my argument.

We have found that the analogies between primitives and neurotics first stated by Freud in *Totem and Taboo* were really analogies drawn between the institutions of primitive mankind on the one side and the "individual institutions" of neurotics on the other. Next I tried to show that all primitive societies were led by medicine men, in other words, by neurotics. Finally we see that according to the opinion both of psychoanalysts and of writers on sociology and of the biologists, some at least of the specifically human features are due to retardation.

Ever since the first attempts were made to apply psychoanalysis to cultural phenomena the structural similarity of culture and neurosis or "psychical system formation" has been tacitly assumed. No psychoanalyst would be likely to contradict Freud's famous three-

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<sup>62</sup> S. Freud, "Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety," *Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, V, 425-427. (*Hemmung, Symptom und Angst*, 1924, 109-111.)

<sup>63</sup> Cf. H. R. H. Prince Peter of Greece, "Psycho-analysis and Anthropology," *Man*, XXXVI, 1936, 181.



fold comparison of paranoia to philosophy, of compulsion neurosis to religion (ritual) and of hysteria to art. By comparing three of the most important aspects of culture to three types of neurosis Freud has implicitly compared culture itself to neurosis in general. Furthermore, if we consider the whole literature on "applied analysis" we see in every case a cultural element of some kind is explained on basis of the same mechanisms that underlie the various kinds of neurosis.

### 3. GROWING UP IN NORMANBY ISLAND SOCIETY

The critical reader is probably far from being convinced by our argument. The most plausible objection that would occur to my opponent would be to say that perhaps it is possible to explain the phantasy life of human beings as based on the infancy situation, but man also lives in and adapts to a real environment. Surely grown up people in all societies do other things besides performing totemic ceremonies and following a set of curious taboos? They must live somehow.

This raises the question of growing up. It is not a far cry from the psychological explanation of civilization to the psychology of growing up.

"When," Freud says, "we compare the cultural process in humanity with the process of development or upbringing in an individual human being we shall conclude without much hesitation that the two are very similar in nature if not in fact the same process applied to a different kind of object."<sup>64</sup>

What happens in Normanby Island from infancy to adult age? A boy is a wild, greedy little thing but when he grows up he will be an esa-esa, a toni-butu. The first word means rich man or chief but etymologically it means fame-fame or name-name. The second means "owner of fame." An esa-esa is a person who gives freely without ever thinking of what he will get in return. When my namesake Doketa praised me for being a real esa-esa he explained that I was an esa-esa not because of the amount of rice or tin food in my store but because I gave freely without reason (beso-beso)<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> S. Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 1930, 133.

<sup>65</sup> Without expecting a return gift.



to men, women and children alike. The other characteristic feature of the *esa-esa* is a curious mixture of boasting and modesty. An *esa-esa* functions principally at a *sagari* and a *sagari* is a ceremonial food distribution. Now the outstanding feature of the feast is the *ona raga* (talk up) or *ona gagasa* (talk proud).<sup>66</sup> The incantations connected with these *ona raga* are direct boastings while the *ona raga*, properly so called, are reproaches repeated in the boasting form. For instance the ceremonial tower (*siwaha*) was put up with the following incantation at the *sagari* of Quaraquarasia:

O paradise bird of Gwamo-gwamo cape! My fame goes up! My name goes up to the sky! My fame goes straight up! I am with my married relations!<sup>67</sup>

Our shadows walk on the shore, etc.<sup>68</sup>

Then Tau Sibweuraj, one of the married relations of Jarekeni's wife (the person who was honored by the feast), said: "Now we have finished the marriage presents for Jarekeni's wife there will be no more, but they have not paid me yet!"

This is also an *ona raga* or boasting word. We have given you presents, but what about the return! Thereupon Gabebe replied for the other side:

I will pay if I have a good harvest next year! I am not afraid! If you plant a long yam, I plant a long yam, if you plant a round yam, I plant one also.

Another type of *ona raga* I have described in a previous paper. Reproaches of the other party are repeated as boasts. The reproaches always refer to presents which they have not received and now, after having given the presents the feeling of guilt at having been slow in giving the presents is transformed into a source of pride.<sup>69</sup> This is what Nejawesi, as representing the people of Gagajowana, says when the tower is completed:

So you say we are only children and there is not a single *esa-esa*

<sup>66</sup> Cf. G. Róheim, "Tauhau and the Mwadare," *Int. Journ. of Psa.*, XIII, 135.

<sup>67</sup> They have brought their yams, and by helping to pile them up to the sky they increase his fame.

<sup>68</sup> *I. e.*, we are healthy, we walk about.

<sup>69</sup> Cf. G. Róheim, *l. c.*, *Int. Journ. of Psa.*, XIII, 133, 135.



among us! You reproached us that we were slow to make a mwadare for your daughters! Look; all these good things we have brought together are for us merely like the excrement that remains in the anus of a child when it has wiped itself after defecation!<sup>70</sup>

The words can and should be interpreted in two opposite senses. As quoted above it is a preposterous boasting, but in the other sense it is modesty, but modesty refuted by the facts: Yes, we are little children and we do not even know how to wipe ourselves after defecation.

The same "boasting modesty" is reflected in their prayers to their sky god Yaboajne. When they captured or killed a man in war, they would shout up to Yaboajne:

You come down, take away these worthless cowards!  
Take them to the sky and send us better warriors!  
We killed this one and we will kill more!

Read one way, it is a real prayer. It befits mere mortals to be modest, to abase themselves before the Divinity in the moment of victory.

But this "prayer to Yaboajne" is "shouted" like the "ona raga" always at the moment of success, when they have killed a man, a boar, or a turtle, or launched a new canoe, etc. The way it is said, the triumphant shout, makes it sound more like a vainglorious boast; even this is nothing, even the victors are cowards, we want something better than this.

Another instance of "boasting modesty" happened at one of the preliminary festivals of Sawaitoja's sagari at Boasitoroba. He showed me the little house-model called a *duguma* which they use at the feast. "I am only a little child (gwama gidarina)," he said, "therefore this house is big. If it were a really big chief, the house would be very, very small (gidagidarina)."

Sawaitoja has been working at the feast, has taken all the trouble and the risks connected with such a feast to show that he is no mere child, but a real esa-esa. At the same time, however, he pleads that he is only a little boy. The greater the chief, the smaller, the more like a toy is the *duguma*. I would add: it is only a very great chief

<sup>70</sup> G. Róheim, *I. c.*, 138.



who can indulge in the supreme boast that he is a small child. I will now try to explain this interpretation. An esa-esa is a rich man. The fact that he is rich proves that he is full of magic, because yams grow by yam magic and a man who has many yams owes these yams to his proficiency in this kind of magic. Besides if he survives the hostility provoked by his riches, the evil magic directed against him, he must be a great sorcerer.

A typical feature in the life of a Duau child is the migration from one relative to the other. This process starts with the weaning; when the child is about a year old it is sent to one of its grandmothers. After a few months the child returns to its own parents. The typical thing is for the boy to go to his uncle where he learns magic of all kinds. Really, however, he may go to several uncles, or elder brothers or cousins. He goes to the relative who likes him and who is willing to give him "magic." The child has something to say too. An old woman told me how her mother beat her because when she was a little girl she refused to go and live with her grandmother. The reason why she was to go and live with her grandmother was the "kobwara" (garden) magic she was to learn there. Thus the child passes from one parental couple to the other and wherever he goes he learns magic. It is true that the maternal uncle is most conspicuous among these father substitutes but he is not the only one. The boy passes through three principal "Œdipus situations." The first is the natural one with the father as ambivalent opponent and the mother as the aim of his desires. The second is his "official" growing up with the uncle and aunt *in loco parentis*. Meanwhile his sister frequently replaces the mother and his brother or cousin may be the antagonist-friend. Finally he finds a wife. He has now to "respect" his brother-in-law who now takes the place of (a) the father, and (b) the uncle. Old ties, however, remain beside the new ones. Thus we see that one of the mechanisms of growing up is displacement or series formation. The result of these displacements is that the original endopsychic tension is *diluted* and an increasing amount of *reality* is introduced into the complex. No uncle or cousin or brother-in-law can equal the importance of the father and no single woman alone can replace the mother of infancy. But while the conflict with the father and the desire for the mother is unconscious with phantasy equivalents in consciousness



the love relation with the wife is real and the give and take with the brother-in-law is the basis of a series of social regulations.

Another change that takes place from the infantile to the adult situation is the transition from passive to active object love.<sup>71</sup> An *esa-esa* is a man who is always giving people food and presents "an ideal mother." A child on the other hand is "*gewana arena*"—"the trunk of asking," always pestering people with his (or her) demands and wishes.

However, the liberal attitude of the adult is a mere fiction. The gifts are always made as counter gifts for what they have received in the past and with the intention to elicit other counter gifts in the future. The greatest offense is to call an *esa-esa*, a giver, *ose* (stingy) and that is just what they are, always bent on receiving presents. I knew the greatest *esa-esas* of the island well and there could be no doubt that their real character was diametrically opposed to the character trait indicated in their social functions. I once decided that I would surprise old Kauanamo by giving him a present that would leave nothing for him to ask for. So when I went to Samarai I bought all the articles of European civilization which Kauanamo had ever seen or desired: tobacco, knife, belt, singlet, etc. They were received with equanimity and a slight show of pleasure. Next morning, however, he was grumbling that we had not brought him soap. It took him some time till he could think of anything to ask for. He would fumble in everybody's basket and ask even young girls or boys for a betel-nut. Nobody dared refuse a wizard of such a reputation. But they called him a nasty and "*gewana*" (bothersome, always asking) old man. On the other hand he had just the same complaints against the people of Sipupu.<sup>72</sup> "They are too *gewana* he used to tell me—always asking for one thing or the other! I shall never come to this place when you leave!"

The case of Ramoramo shows what they are really like. I liked bush turkeys' eggs for breakfast and so he volunteered to bring me some for a certain quantity of tobacco. This looks like ordinary

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<sup>71</sup> Cf. on passivity, activity and mother identification, R. Mack Brunswick, "The Preoedipal Phase of the Libido Development," *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, IX, 248.

<sup>72</sup> Village I lived in; Kauanamo was chief of Majawa.



barter or purchase. He brought the eggs, received his counter gift, and after that was always asking for something. "You won't give me this?" he would say, "Why I brought you the eggs!" The eggs were always carried forward as my liability and whatever I gave him he was still the person who had a right to demand things because he had brought the eggs. If an adult is a person who gives things and a child is a person who receives things we might say that there are no adults in a Duau village, only children who by the force of circumstances are compelled to imitate grown-ups in the parent-child situation because this is the only way in which they can gratify their desire to remain children. A gives to B because he wants to receive things from B and *vice versa*. Passive object love<sup>73</sup> is latent in every manifestation of active object love; we love those who love us, *i.e.*, we love because we yearn for love. Both children and very old men are *gewana*, that is, the aim of growing up is a restoration of the infantile situation with its omnipotence. The triumphant feast giver is a small child who has produced excrements (the gifts), the chief; the grown-up is really a child and his modesty scarcely veils the unbroken narcissism of the human infant (boasting). The greater the chief the more he is like His Majesty Baby, *i.e.*, the smaller the size of his duguma house.

In Manus society, as described by Margaret Mead, we see the same process.

The child in Manus is lord of the universe, undisciplined, unchecked by any reverence or respect for his elder, free except for the narrow thread of shame which runs through his daily life. No other habits of self-control or of self-sacrifice have been laid. It is the typical psychology of the spoilt child. Manus children demand, never give.<sup>74</sup>

As in childhood the child clung to his father, dependent upon his father's affection and care in a one-sided relationship which always emphasized the child's right to receive love, never the father's right to filial devotion, so it is with the spirits. The Manus do not love their spirit guardians who after all are only doing their duty in looking after them. Some of them foresee the time when with the entrance of Christianity, the spirits will be ejected for ever and the skulls will be thrown into the

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<sup>73</sup> Cf. S. Ferenczi, *Versuch einer Genital theorie*, 1924, 29.

<sup>74</sup> M. Mead, *Growing up in New Guinea*, 1930, 50.



sea. But they look upon this with the naughty glee of bad children contemplating the overthrow of their parents with only a passing regret and a great feeling of relief.<sup>75</sup>

Then his youthful arrogance is broken and through the complicated network of economical transactions he becomes a dependent. So as the independence of his youth goes down before the shame of poverty, the generous habits of his youth are suppressed in order that his independence may some day be regained. Finally as the old men or at least some of them emerge from obscurity they again dare to indulge in the violence of childhood, who stamp and scream at their debtors and give way to uncontrolled hysterical rage whenever crossed.<sup>76</sup>

It seems, therefore, that we only grow up in order to remain children. Human society is like a group of authors who are really not very keenly interested in what the other has to say. Yet they attend each other's lectures in the hope of an audience when it is their turn to have their say.

How is this change brought about? An *esa-esa* is a famous man, a *toni-butu* or owner of fame. The caressing and praise received from his parents is transformed into praise from his countrymen. To give small presents to a married relation is called *kamwamwa* (petting). The direct result of this proceeding is a great counter-gift which brings fame (*wasagu*, *haregu*, *butugu*<sup>77</sup>) to the giver and material goods to the receiver, a position which is subsequently reversed at the next encounter. The father is called *to sapwara* = the petter (euphemistically, when he is dead) for he pets and fondles the child. The same thing is repeated on another scale in the child's relation to his uncle for here he receives "magic" for love (*oboboma*). Fame and praise are socialized equivalents of love. We were at Fergusson Island when Waigila was starting his "patara" (kula expedition) to the Trobriands. Everybody thought that this would be the end of Waigila. He might know a lot of *gau* (protective magic) but he would sing the incantations in vain. It would be utterly in vain against the united efforts of all the witches. Kaujaporu was dead two weeks after his famous expedition (described by Malinowski). I was puzzled and I asked them: if his

<sup>75</sup> M. Mead, *l. c.*, 117.

<sup>76</sup> M. Mead, *l. c.*, 208, 209.

<sup>77</sup> Butugu is "my fame" "*wasagu*" "*haregu*" mean "my glory" "my renown."



doom is so certain then why does he undertake the journey? They replied: "*Kana hesana manuna*" (for the sake of his name).

The dangers which threaten a man who undertakes a kune are very significant. They are the witches, also called "our mothers." A detailed study of the magic connected with the une shows two groups of incantations. One group is protective and their aim is to shield the "Argonauts" against their arch enemies, the witches. The other is a kind of *captatio benevolentiae* to obtain the good will, the love and friendship of the strange man and his wife, the trade partners on a foreign shore. I will give one typical case for each kind.

*Gau (Protective-Magic).*

*O branch of the kjaru tree!*  
*O branch of the bujeta tree!*  
*Branch of the mwadawa tree!*  
*Sharp point under the sky*  
*It fell, dropping down*  
*Myself, my mother*  
*Her mouth, falling down*  
*Myself, my sister*  
*Her mouth, dropping down.*  
*Witches, their mouth, it fell, dropped down*  
*Sharks, their mouth, it fell, dropped down.*

The trees mentioned in the first lines are like a fir-tree with leaves like needles. When the witches commence their flight under the sky they start on one of these needle-shaped leaves and they become visible to mortals in the shape of a flying star. If one of the men on an une expedition falls out of the canoe, these fiery witches come and cut the mouth of the drowning man. But they can only do this or they can only send their representatives, the sharks, to devour people if they obtain permission to do this from the man's mother and sister. "Jabom sinagu, jabom nuugu" (myself my mother, myself my sister) is therefore the key word to the protective function of the charm. Security lies in identification with the "good mother" against the witch or "bad mother." At the same time the incantation also shows the difficulties of becoming adult. Their mother used to tell them, "Don't go away, don't wander about the shore or bush." The infant wishes to cling to the mother and to "eat" her, to incorporate her. Being friendly to anybody else,



finding other interests in life means treachery from the mother's point of view and hence the talio-punishment is oral (being eaten).

The following incantation is a *kajowa*: love magic, but also in a more generalized way magic that aims at obtaining the good will of others. They sing this at the place where the une trade partner lives when they push the canoe out to the shore.

*Where is the hill, my hill!*  
*Siloga<sup>78</sup> plain, my plain*  
*Pushing for fame, I push for fame*  
*Pushing it swings,<sup>79</sup> I have pushed it it swings*  
*Their mind running, their mind keeping,*  
*You pass it, with my name, you give me with my fame,*  
*Their bagi, which they would fain keep!*  
*Their bagi, which is asked for*  
*You give me, with my glory*  
*You throw it with my fame*  
*My man with his wife*  
*They bring the cooked food quickly*  
*I gather the cooked food, the present brought by the swimmers!*

Hospitable reception means that the hosts swim out to meet the canoe bringing cooked food for their guests. "Igu tai mamwanena" (my man and his wife) are his trade partner and his wife whose bagi he is trying to get. If the *kajowa* is successful the couple will love him, give him what he desires and feed him. In general they will act like "good mothers." The technical term for trade partner is *gu magi*, i.e., *igu magi*, "my betel-nut." Chewing the betel-nut is the main addiction of this culture area. They are leaving the mothers of their infancy to find new mothers whom they can also "eat," i.e., love. The greater the number of "mothers" whose love they can obtain, the greater their "fame" and "glory," which is the socialized form of infantile happiness. And the greater their glory and "name," the more they have the right to regard themselves as adults.

In a paper published some years ago Hermann summarizes his researches on grasping and seeking as partial impulses of the libidinal

<sup>78</sup> Mythical place of origin of all bagis (bagi=shell-string).

<sup>79</sup> They are pushing the boat with a pole. They all rise suddenly when they sing this line and this gives the boat a swing.



trend. The relatively premature separation of the human infant from the mother (*i.e.*, retardation) explains the significance of the grasping reflex.<sup>80</sup> The opposite "seeking" impulse with the aim "away-from-the-mother" is evolved in consequence of a series of frustrations and is ultimately the same as the "grasping" reflex.<sup>81</sup>

A patient of mine whose mother died when she was in her first year, always began the hour by observing that it was a pity to come and finished by protesting desperately against the termination of the hour. As a child she always regarded the movements of all adults with a feeling of awe, for she was always afraid they would tell her to leave the room. Her youth consisted in an involuntary migration, she never knew when she was going to be sent to live with another aunt or another sister. At present she is very nervous. She has a baby, it must be stilled regularly and this is a bond she can never break. Also she has relations staying with her; another intolerable bond. Never having had a real mother whom she could "grasp" (metaphorically) she finds it intolerable that others should cling to her (as mother or hostess). The termination of the hour means that I have broken a bond, a good interpretation is received as an approach, a grasping.

Yet, as Hermann shows, there is a qualitative difference between "the back to the mother" and the "away from the mother" trend. The latter is a repetition of the former with a certain quantity of suspended object libido frequently interrupted by narcissistic states of intoxication.<sup>82</sup> Now the one is a periodically repeated migration; sometimes it results in a real migration in a breaking up of old family ties and in founding a new family. It is important to observe in connection with Hermann's view on separation anxiety and masochism as connected with the "seeking" impulse that the wanderer on the one hand is afraid of being devoured by witches, and that the masochistic phantasy with the Land of Women is a part of the myth on the first one. The narcissistic element is abundantly clear in the songs (fame, glory) while the only addiction of these people is the betel-nut (magi) which they chew with their one

<sup>80</sup> I. Hermann, "Sich Anklammern Auf-Suche Gehn," *Int. Z. für Psa.*, XXII, 351.

<sup>81</sup> I. Hermann, *l. c.*, 358.

<sup>82</sup> I. Hermann, *l. c.*, 362.



friend whom they also call "*my magi*." But the real grown-up in this society is not merely a wanderer,<sup>83</sup> he is the hero of the one who goes and returns who can unite seeking and grasping, mobile and permanent object relations.

I will now try to gain some insight into the psychology of growing up through clinical material. We have seen that according to the unanimous opinion of psychoanalysts, neurosis is a specific form of delayed infancy while the aim of the cure is to promote maturation. In our own society we can observe the same mechanisms at work in the psychological aspects of becoming adult.

*Patient A.* Age thirty, a lawyer, married, compulsion neurosis.<sup>84</sup>

*Dream: I am wandering in Spain with my wife and we are tired of walking. We meet a poor man, who nevertheless is an intelligent person, a kind of secretary or scribe. He is on friendly terms with a prince, his employer, owner of a large estate. He tells the prince to take us to our place of destination in his motor-car and we terminate the journey successfully.*

The Prince is the dreamer as His Majesty Baby. The poor scribe is the same. He has always regarded work as a degradation, as the dreadful lot of adults. Walking is coitus, the car means the same but in an improved attitude. He is about to be a father and his relations to his wife are improving. Spain has to do with the war between the two parties and with the aggressive (compulsion) element in his married life. The scribe and the prince are on friendly terms; the compulsion of work is made bearable by omnipotence phantasies carried over from the infantile to the adult situation.

*Patient B.* Mixture of obsessional and other trends with a peculiar form of compulsive onanism. Age twenty-eight. School teacher.

*Dream: I go back to the school in Austria. My mother is there and she tells me that I must hide because the new children who have taken my place will throw me out. Then there is a kind of wandering through a "neutral" uninteresting patch of land. Finally I come to an inn where wine is to be had for sixpence. In the last part, I see a hilly place, ups and downs, valleys.*

<sup>83</sup> Odhin, the All-Father is a wanderer; R. M. Meyer, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte*, 1910, 249.

<sup>84</sup> The case material quoted is all derived from work at Budapest.



The wandering through the dull patch of land represents work and the inn his everyday love life. In his liaisons he hates giving even the smallest present to the girl because he is afraid of giving himself up. He has elaborated a careful theory on the food he ought to eat, the calory value of the food, his monthly income and the result is that even the slightest present given to the girl involves complete self-destruction. In other dreams he represents growing up as wandering, climbing a hill (mother) although he is lame (castration anxiety). The last part of the dream stand for difficulties overcome, for the end of the journey. He has learnt to give up his desire to go back into infancy (first scene), to bear the "dullness" of work, to give love to women without anxiety—and finally what is the result? He finds a country full of mounds and these mounds remind him of the Mons Veneris. Tannhäuser's journey to Venus: he always thought it was the same thing as when he came home for the holidays to his mother. Finding the object means a rediscovery of the lost object, the "seeking" which takes us away from the mother is but a new edition of the clutching which takes us back to the mother.

*Patient C.* Age thirty-eight, married, employee; character analysis, inferiority complex.

*Dream:* I am pushing a boat on frozen ground or on a railroad. We are on a walking tour through Austria. Some of my girl colleagues are present. It is difficult to make headway; we must get into a little town before nightfall. Suddenly the boat becomes a barrel and I put it on a wheelbarrow. I am happy now; I make quick progress.

Pushing the boat (penis) on frozen ground refers to difficulties connected with imission and to his various love affairs. The barrel is a pregnant woman, his wife. He is about to become a father before nightfall (refers to his wife's age). The barrel reminds him of a scene in his father's inn; his sister lifted a barrel. She tried to induce him to have intercourse with her but he was ashamed. The dream signifies infantile phantasies fulfilled. It is he and not others who cohabit with the mother (the railroad reminds him of her legs). From the libidinal point of view growing up consists in finding the way back to the mother. The life of an infant consists in a series of frustrations which commence with birth. He has to



bear the loss of intrauterine happiness; he learns what it means to desire something without receiving it. He can tolerate suspense. At this juncture, however, the road is bifurcated. One road is determined by the substitute objects which the infant finds on its own body. The other road is extravert, it finds substitutes in environment; the clutching becomes a seeking. Instead of sucking his thumb when he can not hang on to his mother's nipple the future *esa-esa* of Duau or Dobu seeks new alliances, seeks to spend his whole life suing others for their gifts and in being sued by others. Incidentally this psychic trend becomes the basis of an economic activity. For in order to receive *bagis* or *mwaris* (shell strings and arm shells) one must not only perform incantations but also bring presents of food. If one wants to bring food presents one must also till the soil. We remember Gabebe's answer at the feast: "I am not afraid if you plant a yam. I plant one," etc. Presents received and not reciprocated shame the owner and therefore *pwatura* is transformed into *tanoa*, jungle into garden, Id into Ego.

This takes us to our next problem which is also closely connected with the psychology of growing up. Civilization is as we have said not merely a series of totem ceremonies, it is also a mode of group living. If human beings are to obtain nourishment they must do something to get it and they choose to do what they can in groups. Taking, provisionally, a western and middle class view of the situation this simply means that an adult person has a profession. In analysis we find that there is always a reason why a certain profession has been chosen. Thus a well-known author used to defecate into his trousers when he was about three. His mother used to say "Be ashamed of yourself" whenever this happened. He remembers that this once occurred when he was running up and down in the nursery. He went into the next room and called his mother to see what he had done. "Self," he said and showed her the feces with great pride. Evidently the "be ashamed of yourself" was not accentuated so very aggressively and at a still earlier period his feces were probably received with pleasure. When he wet his bed he woke up and the first thing he used to say was "father's bed." Then they would put him into father's bed beside his mother by which he obtained the realization of his Oedipus phantasies and his first "royalty" as an author. He continued to give his "self" in his poems.



which always were made very much of by his mother, a proceeding which he disliked and felt ashamed of ("be ashamed of yourself").

The other case is that of a doctor. He heard and saw the primal scene and when he asked what his father (also a doctor) was doing the reply was "operating." At three he had made up his mind that he would be a doctor and at five he alarmed and pleased his father by making some quite correct remarks regarding the lack of precision in the preparations made for sterilization by his father's assistant. The little Árpád, the boy with the cock totemism described by Ferenczi, had completely repressed his cock phobia when in later life he became the owner of a poultry farm.<sup>85</sup>

This discussion of the problem of growing up is admittedly one sided. Comparing it to the usual anthropological discussions of the problem of growing up it examines the opposite side of the medal. Margaret Mead describes the process of growing in a Manus society "Small children have been made ashamed of excretion, ashamed of sex organs. The adults have been shocked, embarrassed, revolted, and the child has responded." Other social taboos have been grafted later. Whenever the child does or says something he is not supposed to do the onlookers will show signs of uneasiness and embarrassment.<sup>86</sup> In anthropological publications we have a description of what the adults do to make the children conform to their ideals. What we are trying to show is that these ideals themselves are based on the infancy situation on that peculiar aspect of human nature *which is rooted in our delayed infancy*. The infancy situation is modified or inverted by the process of *maturation* again modified by the necessary adjustment to reality, yet it is there and supplies those unseen libidinal ties without which no human group could exist.

In *Totem and Taboo*, Freud has shown a close analogy not between the "savage" as an individual and the neurotic but between the dynamics and structure of primitive cultures and individual neuroses as found in our own culture. In every primitive tribe we find the medicine man in the center of society and it is easy to show that the medicine man is either a neurotic or psychotic or at

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<sup>85</sup> Personal information from Dr. Ferenczi.

<sup>86</sup> M. Mead, *Growing up in New Guinea*, 1930, 205, 206.



least his art is based on the same mechanisms as a neurosis or psychosis. Human groups are actuated by their group ideals and these are always based on the infantile situation. In Central Australia I have found the emphasis on an exclusively male society and I could show that this is a defense erected against a libidinal danger situation created by the mother in infancy. Conversely on Normanby Island we have a "paternal trauma" and a society with the dominant idea of the mother clan. In Northwest America we have a kind of socialized megalomania based on the over-compensation of a sense of inferiority, ultimately probably on castration anxiety. In other cases the dominant idea of a culture may be an addiction but it is always a system formation that can be explained on the basis of the infantile situation.

It is also in the infantile situation, that is, in the prolongation of infancy, that we find the key to the specific aspects of human nature whereby mankind is differentiated from other animals. Bally derives the reality principle from play activity. Briffault explains man's adaptability and sociability on basis of our prolonged infancy and the writer has discussed human culture as a defense against infantile libidinal situations conditioned by our prolonged infancy (*The Riddle of the Sphinx*, 1934). On the other hand Freud and psychoanalysts in general regard neurosis as arrested growth, as a prolongation of the infancy situation. If the analogy between the cultural process in mankind and the psychology of growing up is valid we must be able to learn something from studying the process of growing up in a primitive society. The social ideal of Normanby Island is somebody who gives freely and their underlying personality structure is just the opposite of this social ideal. In growing up we substitute active for passive object love. We find substitutes for the love objects of infancy but under the veneer of giving love we always retain the desire to receive love and the loves and triumphs of adult life are really "Paradise Regained," the refinding of the infancy situation on another level.



## CHAPTER TWO

### ECONOMIC LIFE

#### 1. PRIMITIVE ECONOMICS

The psychoanalytic method in anthropology has frequently been criticized for not taking account of economic factors. Naturally nobody has ever denied the fact that the life of an Australian native depends not only on totemic ceremonies but even more on the flesh of the kangaroo. It is of course an interesting field of research to show how the distribution of game or of edible plants or of soil suitable for cultivation influences the life of a primitive tribe. These factors may determine the size of the group, its sedentary or migratory habits, and some other aspects of social life.<sup>1</sup> They may even in certain cases have an important bearing on the psychology of the group. Dr. Kardiner has shown how when a new form of cultivation is introduced, *and thereby the family tie weakened*, certain changes in personality development will ensue.<sup>2</sup>

This of course does not mean that the psyche as such is dependent on an economic situation, because the change operates only through a change in the father-son or some other infancy situation.

Be that as it may, however, the course I am following in this paper is the opposite one. I am trying to show the significance of phantasy or emotional life in shaping the economic situation, in other words, the activity of Id forces operating as Ego forces. After all this is what we must expect. The Ego is the part of the Id that has become modified through environment.<sup>3</sup> The Ego is the Rider, the Id the Horse, but the force used by the Ego in managing the reins is a borrowed force.<sup>4</sup>

Freud assumes that the energy in the Ego is really Eros in a desexualized form which acts according to the pleasure principle

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Julian H. Steward, *Basin Plateau Aboriginal Sociopolitical Groups*, Bulletin of the Bureau of American Ethnology, 120, Washington, 1938.

<sup>2</sup> A. Kardiner, *The Individual and His Society*, 1939, 329.

<sup>3</sup> S. Freud, "Das Ich und das Es" (*Gesammelte Schriften*), VI, 368.

<sup>4</sup> S. Freud, *l. c.*, 369.



to avoid tension and facilitate detension.<sup>5</sup> I. Hermann has repeatedly shown the dependency of thought process on instinctual processes. The desire for synthesis can be derived from the Eros, the trend toward formalism in thinking from Thanatos.<sup>6</sup> Duality in thinking is the mother-child situation.<sup>7</sup> Projection is derived from smelling<sup>8</sup> and so on. In a recent publication the same author interprets hunting from the grasping impulse, traps from the hide and seek play as an inverted form of grasping.<sup>9</sup>

Primitive economics or economics in general are certainly what in psychoanalysis we call ego-activity. The constructions that follow therefore should be taken as a contribution to the study of how Id trends influence and shape these Ego activities or rather how they are transformed into these Ego activities. I am not denying that Ego activities, *i.e.*, activities derived from reality adjustment, have an influence in canalizing and directing these Id trends, or that the economic situation retroactively influences or limits or transforms the manifestations of our Id drives.

The aim of the present paper, however, is different. It ought, nevertheless, to contain an investigation of the problem of Property and Money, but considerations of space have prompted me to reserve that problem for a separate paper.

If we read descriptions of the search for food in primitive tribes, we may well marvel at their attainments, at the techniques they employ, and at the long list of foodstuffs they manage to find in their areas. On the Tully River (Queensland) they dig wells to keep the water. Or they may ram a spear down into the ground and a bunch of dried grass after it. They suck the water up by a reed and the grass acts as a strainer. In the hinterland of the Princess Charlotte Bay, on the Palmer and Pennefather Rivers and elsewhere they derive water from the Melaleuca tree. The butt of this trea-tree is ordinarily more or less circular in section but here and

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<sup>5</sup> S. Freud, *l. c.*, 389.

<sup>6</sup> I. Hermann, "Studien zur Denkpsychologie." *Acta Psychologica*, V, Amsterdam, 1940, 34.

<sup>7</sup> I. Hermann, *l. c.*, 35.

<sup>8</sup> I. Hermann, *l. c.*, 46.

<sup>9</sup> I. Hermann, "Anklammerung, Feuer, Schamgefühl." *Int. Z. für Psa. und Imago*, XXVI, 1941, 261.



there is to be met one or more lozenge-shaped, due to a lateral bulge. From the bases of these bulges when cut a pint or two of water is obtainable. W. E. Roth also gives us a long list of plants, the roots, seeds, bulbs or fruit of which is eaten together with various devices for eliminating disagreeable flavors. They eat ants, wasps, larvae, grubs, and caterpillars and, of course, all the crustaceans and molluscs they can get. The description of techniques used in fishing occupies several pages.<sup>10</sup> Leonard Schultze's description of the Bushmen of the Kalahari gives us the same feeling of the resourcefulness of primitive mankind.<sup>11</sup>

All food-gathering tribes, however, are getting their living the way our animal forebears did. It is true that the range, the variety, the ingenuity are very much increased, but apart from the possession of tools and fire<sup>12</sup> the principle is the same. Man eats what he finds in his environment. He can satisfy his hunger without *cooperation* and without *production*.

It is obvious to any student of anthropology that the historical sequence of events in social change has been away from independence and toward an increased cooperation. I myself have commented upon the fact that a Central Australian child at the age of 10 or thereabouts is practically independent economically and Leonard Schultze comments with admiration and envy on the bushmen that they are not "Teilmenschen" who are only capable of living under the protection of the community, but they are the free and self-reliant sons of the desert.<sup>13</sup> Herskovits, commenting on the differences between a primitive group and a society in the machine age quotes a number of testimonies to support the same conclusion. "In primitive societies almost every person aside from the ubiquitous division of work along sex lines knows all the techniques essential for his own support and for the support of those dependent upon him."<sup>14</sup>

The first form in which this absolute economic autarchy of the

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<sup>10</sup> Walter E. Roth, *Food, its Search, Capture, and Preparation*. North Queensland Ethnography, Bulletin 3, Brisbane, 1901.

<sup>11</sup> L. Schultze, *Aus Namaland und Kalahari*, 1907, 650.

<sup>12</sup> These two fundamental aspects of culture will be discussed later.

<sup>13</sup> L. Schultze, *Aus Namaland und Kalahari*, 1907, 677.

<sup>14</sup> Melville J. Herskovits, *The Economic Life of Primitive Peoples*, 1940, 12.



individual is shattered is that of the economic cooperation between the sexes. Now it is perfectly evident that the male cannot devote himself exclusively to hunting big game till he has a wife who finds the edible roots and grubs for him. The reason for having a wife is again not the desire to organize labor on these lines<sup>15</sup> but simply love that is a non-periodical permanent sexual desire and the emotions based on this desire. The first form of cooperation in economics is between man and wife, that is, it is based on a sexual situation.

Man alone among animals develops situations in which the art of making a living depends essentially on other members of his species, and man alone develops methods of actually making, producing his own food. It is these two features of human life which we are about to investigate from a psychoanalytic point of view.

## 2. THE MEDICINE MAN AS THE FIRST PROFESSION

Apart from the "professions" of hunter, fisherman and gatherer of fruit or edible roots the first profession in human evolution is that of the medicine man. The basic theory is that disease is caused by a foreign substance which has been "shot" into the body of the patient by another medicine man or spirit and which the medicine man has to remove by the aid of suction. Professor Seligman writes on these "sendings" among the Southern Massim:

Disease is caused by means of a "sending" projected from the body of a sorcerer or witch; particular interest is attached to the "sending" because it is thought of as leading a separate life after the death of the individuals in whom it is normally immanent. The "sending" is most commonly projected from the body of a woman and after her death may pass to her daughter, or with her spirit or shade pass to the other world.

In Gelaria the "sending" was called *labuni*. *Labuni* exist within women and can be commanded by any woman who has had children. . . . It

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<sup>15</sup> The assertion of Grosse, who is trying to make the opposite point, that "an Australian just permits his wives to feed him and to serve him" (E. Grosse, *Die Formen der Familie und die Formen der Wirtschaft*, 1896, 15) is quite beside the mark. The women are influenced in the choice of men (in so far as they have anything to say in the matter) by the fact that he is good at catching kangaroos, but men will choose a woman because of her sexual desirability.



was said that the labuni existed in or was derived from, an organ called ipona, situated in the flank and literally meaning egg or eggs. The labuni was said actually to leave the body and afterwards to re-enter it per rectum. Although labuni resemble shadows they wear a petticoat which is shorter than that worn by the women in this part of the country. Labuni produce disease by means of a sliver of bone, or fragment of stone or coral, called gidana, which they insert into their victims body. A fragment of human bone or a mans tooth is a specially potent gidana. The labuni is said to throw the gidana at the individual to be injured from a distance of about 60 yards. The gidana was then removed by the medicine man by massage and suction.<sup>16</sup>

In Northern California disease is caused by an invisible supernatural object sharp at both ends and clear as ice which they call a "pain". A "pain" possesses the power of moving even after it has been extracted and flies through the air to the intended victim at the command of the person who sends it. The medicine man after extracting the disease object or pain almost always exhibited it. In Northwestern California the medicine man would swallow this pain and the degree of his power depended upon the number of pains he kept in his body. The rattlesnake was thought to inject a material animate object into its victim which the rattlesnake shaman must extract.<sup>17</sup> The Takelma regarded disease as directly caused by a disease-spirit or "pain". The shaman, always feared and always suspected of being responsible for whatever ill might befall the individual or the village community, was said when bent upon the death of some one "to go out of his house with a disease spirit" and to "shoot people with it."<sup>18</sup> The Achomawi believe that a "pain" grows in size and strength by killing people. If a shaman does not catch the "pain" when it returns to him after killing the person it has been shot into, he loses all control over it and it goes about killing people of its own initiative. This is the cause of epidemics. The only way to put an end to it is to kill the shaman to whom such a pain belongs for at the death of a shaman all his pains

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<sup>16</sup> C. G. Seligman, *The Melanesians of British New Guinea*, 1910, 640-642.

<sup>17</sup> A. L. Kroeber, *The Religion of the Indians of California*, University of California Publications in American Archeology and Ethnology, Vol. 4, No. 6, 1907, 333.

<sup>18</sup> E. Sapir, "Religious Ideas of the Takelma Indians," *Journal of Am. F. L.*, 1907, 41.



die also.<sup>19</sup> Brett mentions a case in Guiana where owing to the idea of these disease-causing substances in the body a woman inflicted on herself a mortal wound with a razor in the attempt to cut out the imaginary cause of the pain.<sup>20</sup>

Regarding the Indians of the Issá-Japurá District (South America, Rio Negro) we are told that "much of the medicine man's ceremonial healing consists of blowing and breathing over the patient, as well as the usual sucking out of the poison, the evil spirit that, in the guise of stick, stone, thorn, etc., lurks in the flesh of the sufferer." Old women breathe over forbidden food to remove the poison and make it permissible to eat, or they will breathe over a delicate child to improve its health.<sup>21</sup>

In some Western Australian dialects the medicine man is called a boylya or more precisely a boylya-gadak, *i.e.*, owner of a boylya.<sup>22</sup> But the medicine man himself is also called a boylya. These boylyas of hostile tribes eat the flesh of the sleeper and thus cause his death. They travel through the air unseen, eat the flesh of human beings and enter the body in the shape of a quartz crystal.<sup>23</sup> The "boglia" extracts a stone called boglia by sucking it out of the patient's body. The quartz-crystal is in the stomach of the "boglia" and this crystal is the seat of his power. He sends these boglias into those whom he wishes to make sick. When he dies, this "*ente malefico*" passes into his sons stomach.<sup>24</sup> There seems to be no other source of this Boollia than the human body and one of the favorite localities from which it is obtained is the anus.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>19</sup> R. B. Dixon, "Notes on the Achomawi and Atsugewi Indians", *Am. Anthr.*, 1908, 218.

<sup>20</sup> W. H. Brett, *The Indian Tribes of Guiana*, 1868, 366.

<sup>21</sup> T. W. Wiffen, "A Short Account of the Indians of the Issá-Japurá District", *Journal of Am. F. L.*, 1913, 59, 60.

<sup>22</sup> G. F. Moore, *Diary of an Early Settler in West Australia*, 1830-41) and also a *Vocabulary of the Language of the Aborigines*, 1884, 13. Bilyi-navel. Bilyi-gadal-navel-possessor, *ibid.*, 9. Cf. G. Grey, *A Vocabulary of the Dialects of South Western Australia*, 1841, 17, 18, 40. I. Brady, *Descriptive Vocabulary of the Native Language of West Australia*, 1845, 16.

<sup>23</sup> G. Grey, *Journals of Two Expeditions to North West and Western Australia*, 1841, II, 321-325.

<sup>24</sup> Monsig. D. Rudesindo Salvado, *Memorie storiche dell' Australia particolarmente di Nuova Norcia*, 1851, 299, 354, 358.

<sup>25</sup> A. Oldfield, "The Aborigines of Australia", *Transactions of the Ethnological Society*, III, 235.



In Central Australia the objects extracted by the *nankara*-men from the patient's body are *nankara*-stones and pointing bones. Naturally both are extracted from the body of the patient after having been projected into the same by another medicine man. The pointing bone or stick is held as if it were taken from the part of the sorcerer's body which lies behind the penis. The characteristic way of holding the bone shows that it is a symbolic penis. The victim must be asleep. The sorcerer takes semen from his penis and excrement from his anus, and by throwing them in the direction of his enemy forms a cloud behind which he hides. An object which is projected from the body of the sorcerer into the body of the victim which is held like a penis and emerges from behind the penis, which is accompanied by semen and excrements is obviously an "anal sadistic" phallos. As for the invisible *nankara* stones their significance is made quite clear by *Pukuti-waras* dreams.

My soul flew westward in the form of a *wamulu*.<sup>26</sup> The wind blew the feather it rolled about and disappeared in the sand. Then I (the soul) flew up to the Milky Way where there was a black mountain to which the souls always fly. Two rocks which looked like fire rolled down, I flew towards the north. Two unborn children (*iti-iti*) were there in a hollow tree. They were twins and their mother was standing beside the tree.<sup>27</sup> I killed both with my penis. First I stood in front of them as if I were going to throw my testicles and these became *nankara* stones—and then I killed them with my penis. I roasted them using my forehead as a spit and I will eat them to night (*viz.*, in his dream)<sup>28</sup>.

This dream gives us the clue to the profession of the medicine man. For *Pukuti-wara* is trying to kill (and eat) two children (the associations show that they are his own children) by breaking a fundamental coitus taboo of all Central Australian societies; he penetrates into the body of a pregnant woman with his penis. Now we can not fail to see that the activity of the medicine man is the equivalent of the infantile body destruction phantasy (M. Klein) with the conscious aim of life instead of death, with restoration instead of destruction. For what is the unconscious meaning of the

<sup>26</sup> Eagle down used at ceremonies. Penis symbol.

<sup>27</sup> The twins in the hollow tree—in the mother. Mother stands beside the tree. (Symbol is duplicated.)

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Róheim, *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, 1934, 71.



substances which the medicine-man sucks or rubs out of the patient's body? In New Guinea only women who have given birth to children can project a *labuni* and the *labuni* goes back into the body per rectum—a symbol of the child and the feces. The Californian idea of personifying these "pains" points to an underlying child or penis (moving=erection) concept. In Western Australia we found clear evidence for the anal significance of the quartz-crystal, while our Luritja and Pitchentara data prove that the projectiles are penis, testicle, and child symbols.

Pukuti-wara the "half-devil" as his friends called him was continually eating demon-children in his dreams. We know that, following tribal custom he has actually killed three or four of his own children and given them to their mother and brothers to eat. Once, he tells us, as he was sleeping beside the fire, a devil-child came out of his calf and jumped about on the heads of the men sleeping in the camp. It cut off one testicle from each of them just as his own testicle had been cut off at initiation.<sup>29</sup> From these the child devil formed a supply of kukurpas or nankara-stones which were stored up in Pukuti-wara. This demon is called Tjitjingingarpa (mad child). It urinates on its master's face and is thus the cause, as Pukuti-wara proudly explained, of his fine long beard.<sup>30</sup>

The "mad child" is in Pukuti-wara, he himself is the mad child with the aggression primarily directed against the mother's body and with the phantasy of tearing the father's penis ("combined parent" concept or primal scene) or her children or feces out of the mother's body. He becomes a medicine-man in the first instance by a phantasy compensation of the retribution anxiety connected with body destruction ideas. This is the initiation of the shaman.

Within the cave the *iruntarinia*<sup>31</sup> (spirit) removes all the internal organs and provides the man with a completely new set. In addition to providing the young medicine man with a new set of internal organs, the *iruntarinia* is supposed to implant in his body a supply of magic Atongara stones which he is able to project into the body of a patient

<sup>29</sup> The latter is a fact.

<sup>30</sup> G. Róheim, *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, 1934, 38.

<sup>31</sup> Explanation of the name as given to me at Hermannsburg by old Moses (one of Strehlow's informants, head of the Christian Aranda): *Erunta-rinja*—those belonging to the cold, i.e., the doubles who live under the earth.



and so to combat the evil influences at work within. So long as these stones remain in his body he is capable of performing the work of a medicine-man.<sup>32</sup>

According to an account given by a Warramunga medicine man, the spirits cut him open, took all his insides out and provided him with a new set. Finally they put a little snake in his body, which endowed him with the powers of a medicine man. A Binginga medicine man told Spencer that the spirit cut him open right down the middle line, took out all of his insides and exchanged them for those of himself which he placed in the body of the mortal.<sup>33</sup> Two of Pukuti-waras dreams refer to his initiation. In one of these the spines of the porcupine (*Echidna*) stick out of the earth and penetrate into his body. A kurunpa (soul) in the shape of an eagle-hawk eats his soul. The real initiation dream is a full version of the same theme.

The soul of a man came in the shape of an eagle-hawk. It had wings but also a human penis. It caught my soul with this penis and dragged it out by the hair. My soul hung down from the penis and the eagle-hawk flew about with me, first to the west and then to the east. It was dawn and the eagle-hawk man made a great fire into which he threw my soul. My penis became quite hot and he pulled the skin down. He took me out of the fire and carried me to the camp. Many nankara people (medicine men) were there in a group; they were only skeletons with no flesh. Their bones were like the spines of a porcupine. The eagle hawk threw me on these bones and they went into my body. We went to the west and the eagle-hawk-man opened me. He took out my lungs and liver only leaving my heart. We flew to the west, where there was a small devil child. I saw the child and raised my hand to throw the nankara stones. My testicles hung down and flew off like nankara-stones. A man came out of one of the testicles and stood beside me. He had a very long penis and with this he killed the devil-child. He gave it to me and I ate it. Then both souls (*viz.*, the child and the phallic person) went into my body.<sup>34</sup>

In the book from which I quote this text I have already interpreted the dream on the phallic, castration anxiety and primal scene

<sup>32</sup> B. Spencer and F. I. Gillen, *The Arunta*, 1927, II, 392, 393.

<sup>33</sup> B. Spencer and F. I. Gillen, *The Northern Tribes of Central Australia*, 1904, 484-487.

<sup>34</sup> G. Róheim, *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, 75, 76.



level. We know that the dream is the dream version of a real event, for Pukuti-wara really lost one testicle when he was initiated. We now see that from the point of view of the body destruction phantasies the testicle torn out of the scrotum represents also the the phantasy child in the body and in general valuable body contents. Both the penis as the means by which he as aggressive father penetrates into the mother's body and the child whom he would tear out of the mother's body are in him. The child within is like the nankara-stones or other "internalized" objects, a kind of reassurance against talion anxiety. "It is not true that I shall be torn to pieces because I wished to tear the penis, the child (etc.) out of my mother, on the contrary, I am full of valuable and indestructible magical objects." When he becomes initiated he has already undergone what he is afraid of, *viz.*, being eaten by the mother,<sup>35</sup> or having his intestines removed. The versions in which the removal of the intestines is represented as an exchange of intestines between the shaman and the supernatural clearly prove the talion nature of the removal phantasy. In the Kabi tribe:

A man's occult art would appear to be proportioned to his vitality, and the degree of vitality which he possessed depended upon the number of sacred pebbles and the quantity of yurru (rope) which he carried within him. One kind of sacred pebble was named "kundir" and the man who had abundance of them was called "kundir bönggan" (pebbles many) and was a doctor of the lower degree. The "manngur" was a step in advance. He had been a party to a barter with "dhakkan" the rain bow and the latter had given him much rope for a number of pebbles which he had taken from the man in exchange. This transaction would take place while the black was in a deep sleep. He would be lying on the brink of a water-hole—the rainbows abode. The rainbow would drag him under, effect the exchange, and deposit the man, now a "manngur manngur" on the bank again.<sup>36</sup>

A peculiarly Australian form of death anxiety is evidently based on the body destruction phantasy.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, 65. Cf. the initiation dream of Urantukutu, *ibid.*, 78, where a child (the dreamer) is eaten and vomited by the initiating demon.

<sup>36</sup> J. Mathew, *Eaglehawk and Crow*, 1899, 143. The stones are both "good" and "bad" introjects. Cf. J. Mathew, *Two Representative Tribes of Queensland*, 1910, 172. For another case of exchange, (Binbinga) see above.



The fat taking practice of the Wurunjerri Wirrarap or medicine-man has been fully described to me (Howitt). It was called Burring and was carried out by means of an instrument made of the sinews of a kangaroo's tail and the fibula of its leg which had the same name. Armed with this the medicine man would sneak up to the camp during a mans first sleep. . . . If the time was propitious, the cord was passed lightly round the sleeper's neck and the bone being threaded through the loop was pulled tight. Another Burring was then passed round his feet and the victim carried off into the bush, where he was cut open and the fat extracted. The opening was magically closed up, and the victim left to come to himself with the belief that he had had a bad dream. If the fat thus extracted was heated over a fire, the man died in a day or two, but otherwise he would linger for some time.<sup>37</sup>

We can now attempt to show how the profession of primitive medicine man, this nucleus of all primitive societies, originates. It is evolved on the basis of the infantile body destruction phantasies, by means of a series of defence mechanisms. The first formula is abreaction in phantasy (my inside has already been destroyed) followed by reaction-formation (my inside is not something corruptible and full of feces, but incorruptible, full of quartz-crystals). The second is projection: "It is not I who am trying to penetrate into the body but foreign sorcerers who shoot disease-substances (penis, feces, child symbols) into people". The third formula is restitution "I am not trying to destroy peoples insides I am healing them". At the same time however the original phantasy element of the valuable body contents torn out of the mother returns in the healing technique; to suck, to pull, to rub something out of the patient. The phantasy element of "good" body contents or internalized objects is also evolved on basis of the restitution tendency. Being shot by shells means being initiated into the Ojibwa "Mide" society and the shells symbolizes life.<sup>38</sup> The object which the child is trying to tear out of the mothers body may be the other child who has entered by means of the fathers penis, and the foreign sorcerer or spirit may represent the father in the primal scene. By

<sup>37</sup> A. W. Howitt, *The Native Tribes of South East Australia*, 1904, 375. Cf. for further data on these phantasies and practices G. Róheim, "Das Selbst", *Imago*, VII, 20. G. Róheim, "The Pointing Bone." *Journ. Roy. Anthr. Inst.*, LV, 1925.

<sup>38</sup> W. J. Hoffman, *The Midewiwin of the Ojibwa*, (Bureau of American Ethnology, VII.) 1891, 168, 170, 212. Cf. P. Radin, "The Winnebago Medicine Dance", *Journal of Am. F. L.*, 1911, 149-209.



healing the patient the medicine-man annuls parental coitus while by "shooting" the patient he identifies himself with the father in the primal scene. He can do this because he has internalized the parents as "good objects." Pukuti-wara's magic power is based on three "good objects" in his body. The magic bone, the stone and the snake and they can all be used either for killing or healing purposes. Pukuti-wara called the snake in his body the "mother of the nan-kara-stones." Among the Pindupi the snake in the medicine-man's body is both "father and mother" of the medicine man.<sup>39</sup>

Now we may ask: what is the difference between a medicine man and other individuals in the same society? A hunter lives like a beast of prey, by his strength and skill in killing animals—but a medicine man lives by his infantile complexes. The first "profession" is evolved on the basis of the infantile situation. I assume that, for instance, all the members of the Pitchentara tribe have evolved this system of body destruction phantasies and anxieties. Some of them are more infantile than others, *i.e.*, the libido charge of these phantasy systems is larger than with others. If these individuals manage to find substitutes for the mother's body not in their own body, but in others, they will become medicine men. They are now playing their infantile game based on the system of body destruction phantasies with others who have the same phantasies only not in the same degree. They are the leaders in this game and the lightning conductors of common anxiety. They fight the demons so that others can hunt the prey and in general fight reality.<sup>40</sup> We can now take leave of our friend the medicine man with a quotation from Melanie Klein:

We assume therefore that the reaction-formations of order, disgust, and cleanliness must originate in anxieties based on the earliest danger situations. When . . . object relations set in, the reaction formation of sympathy becomes stronger. The happiness . . . of the object becomes a proof of one's own security, a protection against destruction from within and without. The integrity of one's own body now depends on the restoration of the object.<sup>41</sup>

<sup>39</sup> G. Róheim, *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, 1934, 64.

<sup>40</sup> I have repeatedly discussed the problem of the medicine man. Cf. Róheim, *A varázserő fogalmának eredete*, 1914, 40-68. *Idem*, "Nach dem Tode des Urvaters" *Imago*, IX, 1923, 83. *Idem*, *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, 1934, 57. *Idem*, "The Evolution of Culture", *Int. Journ. of Ps.*, XV.

<sup>41</sup> M. Klein, *Die Psychoanalyse des Kindes*, 1932, 175.



## 3. THE TRADER

From the medicine man it is but a step to the trader. I have quoted the medieval sayings "dat Galenus opes" and "Stercus et urina medici sunt prandia prima, Ex aliis paleas, ex istis collige grana."<sup>42</sup> In the culture area of Dobu, Normanby and the neighboring islands, trade is a ceremonial affair closely interwoven with and backed at every step by magic. The hero of the une must also be a magician, an adept in the art of wooing, or he could not be successful. According to one myth the first *bagi*<sup>43</sup> was found in the intestines of a pig, where they expected to find excrement. In another une origin myth the name of the first *bagi* is dog's semen. Perhaps these facts, taken together with the first forms of money, indicate that the phantasy of an exchange of body contents, a mutual mother-child situation underlies trade.

The Narrinyeri have the following custom. The remains of a child's umbilical cord are carefully preserved by the father in a bunch of feathers. The relic is called *kalduke*. This he will give to a man in another tribe who has children, by which act his child and the other man's children become *ngia-ngiampe* to each other. The duties of this relation are that they may not touch or come near each other, nor speak to one another, and the usual object of the custom is that these children when grown may be entrusted with the barter of commodities between the two tribes.<sup>44</sup>

That is: trade partners are united by the umbilical cord, they are mutually in a mother-child situation. Among the Arapesh trade is guaranteed by sorcery. An informal gift-exchange is carried on between the people of the mountains and the plains whereby the mountain people are supplied with stone axes, bows and arrows, baskets and shell ornaments and the beach people with tobacco, bird-feathers, pots and net bags. The Plains Arapesh are entirely cut off from the sea, hemmed in by enemies and dependent upon their tobacco-crop and the manufacture of shell-rings from giant

<sup>42</sup> G. Róheim, "Nach dem Tode des Urvaters," *Imago*, IX, 110, quoting E. Holländer, *Die Karikatur und Satire in der Medizin*, 1905, 181.

<sup>43</sup> String of small red shells, kind of currency.

<sup>44</sup> E. Crawley, *The Mystic Rose*, 1927, I, 287, from G. Taplin, *The Narrinyeri*, 1878, 33.



clam shells for all their trading with the Abelam from whom they import net bags, etched cassowary daggers, etc. The giant clam shells come from the coast and it is important for the Plainsmen that they should be able to walk safely through the mountain country to obtain them. They can walk through safely because their sorcerers hold the "dirt," that is, pieces of half-eaten food, worn bark cloth, or sexual secretion of the mountain people in their hands. These pieces of dirt have been passed into the hands of Arapesh sorcerers by angry relatives or neighbors who will not employ black magic against their own relatives but will deliver them into the power of the sorcerers of another tribe.<sup>45</sup> The exchange of goods is therefore an equivalent, or an "externalized" version of the exchange of body particles or body contents. The Arapesh distinguish two groups of "dirt," external ones such as food, half-smoked cigarettes, etc., and the others which emanate from the inside of the body such as perspiration, saliva, scabs, semen, vaginal secretion, excreta.<sup>46</sup>

The choice of objects invested with the concept of "value" or, to use the Elliot-Smith-Perry terminology, objects containing "life" is significant. Pearls and gold may represent the feces as symbolized by the contrary (destructible=indestructible, dirty=clean, shining) but shells indicate something else beside this; a closed womb, a difficult entrance. Pearls are the "body-contents" taken from this womb.<sup>47</sup> I have repeatedly discussed money as a feces symbol and trade as a repetition of the child-mother situation so that we need not go into further details this time.<sup>48</sup>

#### 4. THE ORIGINS OF GARDENING

What is the latent significance of agriculture? We know two principal forms of agriculture characterized by their respective implements, the *plough* and the *digging-stick*, or hoe. We may dis-

<sup>45</sup> M. Mead, *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Tribes*, 1935, 10-13.

<sup>46</sup> M. Mead, *l. c.*, 12.

<sup>47</sup> Cf. G. Elliot-Smith, *The Evolution of the Dragon*, 1919, 140-234. W. J. Perry, *The Children of the Sun*, 1923, Chapter VII.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. G. Róheim, "The Evolution of Culture," *Int. Journ. of Psa.*, XV, 388, 401, 402. *Idem*, "Heiliges Geld in Melanesien", *Int. Z. für Psa.*, IX, 384-401. As indicated above, I intend to devote another paper to this theme.



tinguish them as agriculture and horticulture and the latter is the typical economic basis of primitive food-producing tribes. It is the obvious and the natural thing for any animal to pull eatable things out of the earth, but it is less easy to see why and how a systematic group of actions are evolved by which food is not eaten but produced, *i.e.*, a set of movements which tend to satisfy not a present but a future need.

What actually happens in a yam growing community may be taken from Malinowski's admirable monograph on the horticulture of the Trobriand islanders. After having found a suitable patch of soil and removed the big stones

the man squats down, takes the digging stick in his right hand near the point, and breaks the lumps of soil into loose earth. Then with his left hand he feels through the earth while the point of the stick moves through it at the same time, breaking up the lumps and helping the hand to search out small stones, roots and unbroken sods. . . . The hand of the master-gardener seems to go through the loosened soil with a swift, *caressing* (my italics) movement, quickly throwing out stones and bits of root, pushing the unbroken lumps of soil over to the stick to be broken up. The soil is thrown out round the hole as the work proceeds downwards. . . . Another difficulty at this stage is the removal of the small roots. They have to be disentangled and laid bare and then cut with the axe. . . . After the soil has been prepared, a whole yam is placed horizontally in the hole. It is not planted very deep so that there is plenty of loose soil under it.<sup>49</sup>

I shall now quote some of the incantations connected with planting from my own field work. They will help us to understand the unconscious meaning of the whole process. When in the month of Karakonakona, the natives of Boasitoroba make a hole in the ground for the new yams, they rub, stroke and pat the new yams in a *loving, petting* manner and chant the following incantation:

*Its rubbing round* (cf. of the yam)

*O sago of Kibitai*<sup>50</sup>

*O thick trunk of the sago*

*O come across my line!*<sup>51</sup>

<sup>49</sup> Dr. Malinowski, *Coral Gardens and their Magic*, 1935, I, 133, 134.

<sup>50</sup> Village in Boasitoroba district.

<sup>51</sup> The line of his garden.



*It is lying quietly,  
 It is suckled, the famous one!  
 Lying down it is fed by the breast!  
 How long will you be lying?  
 You are lying hiding quietly  
 O yams of the chiefs who win in food competitions!  
 O yams of rich men!  
 Come here from their fields.*

The incantation begins as a sago incantation and continues as a yam incantation. The yam is supposed to hide in the ground and sit still there, and the ground is regarded as a woman who nourishes and takes care of her children, the yams. In the month of Gabugabu when they burn the garden, they make a special magic for the hole of the yam so that the yams should grow "long and soft." It is not necessary to quote the whole incantation, the point is that the yam growing down is compared to semen dropping out. In an incantation of which I have several variants the yam is blood dropping out of a woman.

In the month of Gesogesowa they chop the big yams into pieces before planting them.

*Sine Daroy Tomayero  
 Woman Daroy Tomayero*

*Ya be mwaneyo  
 You and your husband*

*Ibwarumuya Ya raraiyo yaidauya  
 He hit you it your blood dropped out*

*Ido dabadabarara  
 It drops everywhere*

*Idosamasamarili  
 It drops quickly*

Here he enumerates various kinds of yams that originated from the blood of Sine Daroy Tomayero.

*Ido kau kautama  
 Drops come together*

*Ido yogoyogogoma  
 Drops gather in a heap.*

In another similar incantation the magician starts with a married

couple of the *kasa numu* (village underground) people. These spirits, ultimately probably derived from the spirits of the dead, are the real owners of the yam who can further or hinder its life and growth.

Sine        Magi        Seuloni  
"Woman    Betel nut    cut in halves" (or double)

Tau    Damwemewe  
"Man        Soft"

Damwemewe    ibwakwahani  
Soft one        calling up

Sine        Magi        Seuloni  
Woman    Betel nut    cut in halves

Gu    waga    kana    yobona  
My   canoe   its    tying

Mwaoda    udakesey  
How    will you do it?

Madinega        idauya  
From the navel    dropping out

Ido        dabadabara  
Dropping    everywhere

Mainina        bewa nina  
Mainina yam    seed that

Follows the enumeration of all sorts of yams. They are all derived from the blood that poured out of the navel of the "Woman Cut in Halves." The mythical persons mentioned in the first two lines are "*kasa numu*," i.e., spirits of the soil. Woman Cut in Halves<sup>52</sup> is, magically, a guaranty that the yam will be double, or mythologically a personification of the "double" yam. Similarly Tau Damwemewe is a personification of the soft yam, which means good yam. The two are a married couple. What has the canoe to do with the whole thing? It is the canoe of the *kasa numu* people. When they made it Sine Magi Seuloni was pregnant, that is the canoe symbolizes the pregnant body. But only blood came out of her navel, it flowed everywhere and this is the origin of yams; the blood is the yam

<sup>52</sup> Some betel nuts are double.



seed. In other incantations the yams appear as tears, in a myth as excrements. Thus we find the staple food of this culture area symbolically equated with semen, tears, blood, child, excrements and the ground into which it is put and out of which it is taken represented as a suckling or pregnant woman. The Trobriand Islanders use the following formula for planting.

Boginai (name of a woman) is recently deflowered . . . But your vulva, Bomigawagu (another woman) over there at the corner of the fence, has for a long time had a considerable circumference.

Evidently "defloration" refers to the breaking of the ground and the big vulva means deep planting.<sup>53</sup> We may now suggest that the unconscious meaning of taking roots out of the ground was originally the body destruction phantasy of pulling "good body contents" out of the mother's body and that the restitution phase of this phantasy led, by chance, to the origin of the cultivation of these plants. A game played by Normanby Island children and the origin myth of yams are both significant in this connection Ramoramo explained the game as follows. The game is called pwasi (player) saura (happy). When a man plants a garden the little ones gather in a group and one of them is the owner of the garden. He has a planting stick and he sits on the ground singing:

<i>pwasi</i>	<i>saura</i>	<i>pwasi</i>	<i>saura,</i>	<i>kebwa</i>	<i>toyagaba</i>
<i>play</i>	<i>happy!</i>	<i>play</i>	<i>happy</i>	<i>now</i>	<i>the thieves</i>
<i>kadi</i>	<i>weda</i>	<i>yabegubegura</i>			
<i>their</i>	<i>taro</i>	<i>I plant.</i>			

That is, "now I am planting taro for the thief." Then he goes away and the "thief" comes. One by one he takes the children (*i.e.*, taro) from the group. Each time a child disappears the "owner" comes and asks, Taiya (who) igu (my) bagura (garden) iyagahiya (stole)! And the children always reply Kiko (nothing).<sup>54</sup> Finally there is only one child left. They call this child the "mother" or "origin" of the taro, and the owner beats him (or her) for always saying "nothing." When finally the "owner" scolds the "thief" for

<sup>53</sup> Br. Malinowski, *l. c.*, 135, 136. The last irrigation of a field in Egypt is called "weaning". W. S. Blackman, *The Fellahin of Upper Egypt*, 1927, 175.

<sup>54</sup> *Kiko* is a *tokwatokway* (spirit word).



stealing the children (taro) from his garden they all stand up in a group and say:

<i>Karamwakikia</i>	<i>sopire</i>
<i>Lice</i>	<i>fly away</i>
<i>kutobiu</i>	<i>sopire</i>
<i>Big lice</i>	<i>fly away.</i>

This is symbolic (ona semalimali) and the lice are the children. Evidently the game symbolizes children (plants) torn away (separated, stolen) from their mother, and the children are represented by lice, *i.e.*, insects which cling to the surface of the skin. As all games end with this formula, it is possible that they all represent group-formation and separation from the group, *i.e.*, the "grasping"<sup>55</sup> and "seeking" reflexes (group=mother) and body-destruction (separation) and restitution phantasies. At any rate this special game was described by Ramoramo as the play-equivalent of gardening. For, he went on to say, then the boy goes to work and then, this one here (his son) he leaves me, who fed and taught him, and goes to work with his uncle! He complains of the same "loss of a child" that is represented in the game. The mythological origin of yams is given in the following narrative.

Long ago there lived a man with his wife. They went into the bush to hunt with their child. They left the child behind. The child began to cry for his father and mother, he cried a lot and could not find them. Finally he got angry, he took his axe and cut all the trees. He went to sleep and in the morning he went on cutting, right through the bush. Wherever he cut the trees, vegetables grew up, yams, bananas, taro, sugar-cane, etc.

Of course the jungle has actually to be cleared with an axe to make a garden but this does not explain the angry child. The myth clearly shows gardening as originating from the anger (body-destruction phantasies) of a child who has suffered a deprivation. With the restitution phase of the sadistic trend comes planting, the caressing of the yam, the neat and tidy aspect of the garden and ultimately the actual providing for the future, for the next generation.

<sup>55</sup> Cf. I Hermann, "Sich Anklammern Auf-Suche Gehen," *Int. Z. für Psa.*, XXII, 349. *Idem*, "Neue Beiträge zur vergleichende Psychologie der Primaten", *Imago*, XXII, 442, on "grooming" and the grasping reflex.



Anthropologists of various schools will probably object very strongly to all this. For one thing, they will say there is no proof for the assumption that the Trobriand Islanders or Normanby Islanders or even the Melanesians in general are the inventors of yam culture. They may have borrowed it from other cultures and thus all I can prove would merely amount to showing the unconscious meaning attributed to an existing practice by *B* people who have borrowed the custom from *A* people. Or another group of critics might lay stress upon the practical aspect of the custom and say that yams are cultivated because of their usefulness, and that these are only the unconscious aspects of an economical, purposeful activity.

It is easier to refute the second argument. It is obvious that the result of inserting a tuber into the ground could not have been foreseen before it was tried. We are ready to accept the phantasy-picture of a group of food-gatherers playing about with the tubers, if they had had plenty to eat and could manage no more and thus inventing horticulture with a sort of trial and error method. Our explanation applies to the latent meaning of the game. In fact we have seen that playing at gardening precedes actual gardening in the life of the individual and that myth regards a child as the inventor of the art.

The advocates of migration would tell us that the legitimate way of proceeding would be to trace a type of economic activity (agriculture, domesticated animals) to the culture in which it originated and then to try a psychological explanation in the culture in question. Undoubtedly this would be excellent. The only trouble is that it is not and never can be feasible. For one thing these "historical" arguments are extremely phantastic and doubtful. But even if we could, with absolute certainty, prove that a particular plant was first cultivated in a particular way 3000 B. C. in Egypt, we would still be at a loss to know the psychological origin of the customs. The documents offered by history are inadequate not only by chance because we have not found them all in the excavations, but intrinsically because there were no field anthropologists and no psychoanalysts in Memphis or in Ur. Therefore we can not get nearer truth than by assuming that the unconscious significance of certain actions or customs remains unchanged through the ages and in



passing from one nation or race to the other. This agrees with what we find in clinical practice in "borrowing" material (quoting a novel, etc.) the patient's unconscious chooses adequate forms of expressing itself.

### 5. THE PLOUGH AND THE OX

One glimpse at our own form of agriculture will reveal the unconscious meaning of the economic backbone of European civilization.

Plutarch tells us that there were anthropomorphic representations of Osiris with an erect phallos.<sup>56</sup> The festival held in honor of the birth of the god was similar to the phallophoria.<sup>57</sup> The women used to go about the villages singing songs in his praise and carrying obscene images of him which they set in motion by means of strings. At Philae the dead god is portrayed lying on his bier with an erect penis.<sup>58</sup> If we go through the whole series of scenes representing Osiris on his bier on the walls of the temple of Denderah we find beside the three openly "ithyphallic" pictures representations which indicate the same thing in a thinly veiled symbolism. Scene 22, Osiris, bearded, wearing the White Crown with plumes and holding in his hands the sceptre and flail, or whip *raising himself up* on his knees from his bier. Scene 23, Osiris *rising up* out of a basket (?) . . . behind him stands Isis with her wings stretched out on both sides of him, and before him is a bearded god who presents to him "life."<sup>59</sup>

Osiris, the representation of the indestructible and always resurrected phallos, has a wife, Isis, and Wallis Budge suggests that the amulet representing Isis is really the vagina and uterus as seen when cut out of the body and laid on some flat surface, and that the blood referred to in the chapter of the Book of the Dead of which it forms the vignette may be the catamenial flow. The famous Osiris amulet Tet shaped like a pillar is the sacrum of Osiris, *i.e.*, the part of the back which is close to the sperm duct and it is very easy to

<sup>56</sup> Plutarchos, *De Iside et Osiride*, 51.

<sup>57</sup> *Idem*, *l. c.*, 12.

<sup>58</sup> J. G. Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, 1907 (*Golden Bough*, Part IV, 343.) 343.

<sup>59</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, 1904, II, 131-138.



understand the importance which was attached to the amulet for it symbolized the seed of the god Osiris.<sup>60</sup>

Osiris introduced agriculture and civilization into Egypt. His sister-wife Isis discovered wheat and barley growing wild but it was Osiris who taught the people to cultivate these grains.<sup>61</sup> This ruler or god was the husband of his sister and as we should expect he was killed by his brother Seth. His son Horus then appears on the scene as avenger of his father and kills his uncle. In the fight Horus is said to have castrated Seth<sup>62</sup> which looks like a close parallel to the story as told by Plutarch—Osiris dismembered and the parts of his body found by Isis excepting his phallos.<sup>63</sup> But if Osiris and Seth are really identical we must regard Horus as another Oedipus who kills his father Osiris-Seth and succeeds to royalty. It is not necessary to go into further details here as I have done so in a previous publication.<sup>64</sup> The myth on the tragedy of Osiris, the Egyptian god of agriculture and civilization is the Oedipus-drama, slightly veiled by decomposition of the dramatis personae. Now Osiris seems to be closely related to Adonis. Moret explains the pillar Zed as a kind of fir-tree and the other tree ("ouan") connected with the god is also a kind of tree that existed in Syria but not in Egypt.<sup>65</sup> Adonis is Tammuz the god of corn and vegetation,<sup>66</sup> and the myth of Adonis is the story of the Son begotten in incest, and killed by his father in consequence of his incestuous desires.<sup>67</sup> In a recent article Hornblower has shown the phallic nature of Osiris, the basic idea of son-mother incest in his cult and his affiliations with Hither Asia, with Tammuz. These gods are typically the gods of agriculture. What has been interpreted as a whip in the hands of Osiris is a primitive flail which would serve for the scanty

<sup>60</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection*, 1911, I, 277.

<sup>61</sup> J. G. Frazer, *Adonis, Attis, Osiris*, 1907, 270, 271.

<sup>62</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *Osiris*, I, 64. Horus represented as holding the phallos of Seth. Plutarchos, *De Iside*, 55.

<sup>63</sup> Plutarchos, *De Iside*, 18.

<sup>64</sup> G. Róheim, *Animism, Magic and the Divine King*, 1935, 28.

<sup>65</sup> A. Moret, *Le Nil et la Civilisation Egyptienne*, 1926, 93, 94. The dismembered body of Osiris floating in the coffin is washed ashore and enveloped by a tree, which is then transformed into a pillar at Byblos. Plutarchos, *De Iside*, 15, and Byblos is the city of Adonis.

<sup>66</sup> Cf. especially J. G. Frazer, *Adonis*, 189, 194.

<sup>67</sup> G. Róheim, *Animism*, 212.



crops of undeveloped agriculture.<sup>68</sup> In ancient Hellas the Earth is Mother Earth and agriculture is coitus. Phallic demons carry the plough which is itself a phallos and the phallic Dionysos weds Kore the maiden who emerges from the womb of the Earth Mother.<sup>69</sup> Since Ed. Hahn has pointed out the "coincidence" of the castrated animal (the ox) as ploughing the earth, and of castrated priests in the service of the Earth Mother,<sup>70</sup> the view of plough-culture developed on a utilitarian basis may well be regarded as exploded. The Babylonian plough in its oldest form was an implement which was used both for ploughing and sowing and thus the identity of agricultural labor and coitus, so often expressed in language, was still greater in the original form of this implement.<sup>71</sup> At the other end of the Eurasian culture area in Finland we find the tree and fertility goddess Rauni with her son and husband Sämpsä, the "poika pällärvionen," i.e., "Son of the Ploughed Soil."<sup>72</sup>

It is quite evident therefore that the type of agriculture which forms the basis of our own civilization, with the plough and the ox, was evolved on the genital level, on the basis of the Oedipus attitude, and the castration complex.<sup>73</sup>

## 6. MAN'S FIRST COMPANION

The economic basis of our civilization is agriculture and the domestication of animals. Man's first companion is the dog and in Central Australia we can study the process of domestication *in statu nascendi*.<sup>74</sup> If we walk into a Pitchentara camp we see the women sitting at the fire with their babies and puppies. A baby may be

<sup>68</sup> G. D. Hornblower, "Osiris and the Fertility Rite," *Man*, 1941, 94-103.

<sup>69</sup> A. Dieterich, *Mutter Erde*, 1913, 106.

<sup>70</sup> Ed. Hahn, *Die Entstehung der Pflugkultur*, 1909.

<sup>71</sup> Ed. Hahn, "Die Entstehung der Pflugkultur", *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 1916, XVII, 344. Cf. *mentula*, *arare* and *αρου*. Hahn, *Demeter und Baubo*, 1896, 48. Dieterich, *Mutter Erde*, 1913, 109.

<sup>72</sup> J. Loewenthal, "Zur Erfindungsgeschichte des Pfluges", *Zeitschrift für Ethnologie*, 1916, 13, quoting *Finnisch-Ugrische Forschungen*, IV, 240, XII, 203. *Zeitschrift für das deutsche Altertum*, LI, 12.

<sup>73</sup> Hahn's views have been criticized by P. Leser, *Entstehung und Verbreitung des Pfluges*, Anthropos Bibliothek, III, 1931. Leser regards the spade as the prototype of the plough (*l. c.*, 554, 555). Yet the fact remains that the historically oldest area, Babylonia, has a plough that is also a sowing implement, *l. c.*, 259.

<sup>74</sup> The following data are based on my field notes.



feeding at one breast and a puppy at the other. How did they get the puppy? They have been hunting and have speared the old dingos both male and female. The little ones are brought into the camp and fed by human mothers. A dog that has been nourished by human milk is very "*aknara*" (daring, cheeky). It will bite strangers and it is a valuable helper in hunting. The puppies are "smoked" like newborn babies for if they fail to do this the dog will become a *mannu* (demon) and not a normal "human" dog. If a dog "dies" they will cut themselves and cover their head with wounds just as if it had been a human being (Pindupi tribe). Young men have a dog of their own; *i.e.*, several boys are joint owners of a dog. If it is a good dog they call it "Nyitiyara" ("young man") and they mourn for it excessively if it dies. They cut their head till their whole body is covered with blood. Sometimes they bring in too many puppies so that they cannot keep them all. Some of them are knocked on the head, in this case, but they are buried and mourned for like human beings. The Nambutji make a tree grave for their dogs just as they do for themselves. The women knock a hole into their skull with their digging sticks, the men cry and cut themselves with their knives. If they lose a dog the Pindupi and the Yumu will thrust a spear into their leg. A dog will steal a bit of meat in the camp; the owner gets angry and spears the dog. A fight ensues, the dog's master attacks the man and is usually helped by all his relations. The sexual life of dogs is regarded in much the same light as that of human beings. If a male dog has connection with a bitch the owner of the bitch will drive him away by throwing a spear at him. In this case the dog will get no help from his master; serves him right why was he *kulanta* (desirous of intercourse). According to Basedow the dog in an Australian society is kept for purely emotional reasons with no economic advantage whatsoever.

The natives have the dogs about them merely for the love they bear towards them; it is on account of the unreasonable amount of petting and pampering, received at the hands of their masters that the dogs become so thoroughly useless. A native just holds the unruly mob about him for company's sake; he prefers to rely upon his own skill and instinct when hunting, and rarely allows his dogs to go with him, in fact there seems little inclination on the part of the dogs to accompany the chase with their master. They are so well looked after and regularly



steal so much from the general supplies of the camp that they grow fat and lazy.<sup>75</sup> When a dog seems to be off colour or has been accidentally hurt it is nursed like a sick child, it is placed by the fire side, upon the best rug available, and covered with other rugs, the natives themselves going without any covering.<sup>76</sup>

The origin of domestication, that is of an important modification of economic conditions from an emotional motive is quite clear. The desire for tenderness, love, companionship, that is, the inverted repetition of the infantile situation, explains the first steps made by the human species in domestication. Eros enlarges the unit, joins cell to cell, the child to the mother, one man to the other and man to the animal world. Lumholtz draws the following picture of the life of his Queensland friends, and their dogs.

The dingo is an important member of the family. It sleeps in the wurley, gets plenty of food and they never beat it. Its master pets and caresses the animal just like a child, picks its fleas and eats them and kisses the animal on the muzzle.<sup>77</sup>

It is doubtful whether the Tasmanians had dogs before the white man came to the island. But when they had them they treated them just like children.<sup>78</sup>

The parent-child situation refers also to other domesticated animals and pets. Among the Mafulu in New Guinea a woman may not give birth till she has given a pig for the village feast and it is said that a woman might even kill her child and keep the milk for a pig. At any rate they do suckle the pigs.<sup>79</sup> In the mythology of the Uitoto, pet animals occur very frequently and in these stories the animal always calls the human being with which it is connected "father." The songs of the yucca feast, a fertility cult are all derived from mythical ancestors who appear on the scene

<sup>75</sup> This evidently refers to quite different conditions, very unlike what I saw in Central Australia. According to my experience, there are no supplies and no fat dogs.

<sup>76</sup> H. Basedow, *The Australian Aboriginal*, 1925, 118.

<sup>77</sup> C. Lumholtz, *Au Pays des Cannibales*, 1890, 230.

<sup>78</sup> H. Ling Roth, *The Aborigines of Tasmania*, 1899, III. Cf. for further data regarding Australia: C. Horne and Aiston, *Savage Life in Central Australia*, 1924, 32; H. Taunton, *Australind, Wanderings in Western Australia and the Malay East*, 1903, 47; Breton, *Excursions in New South Wales, Western Australia and Van Dieman's Land*, 1833, 193.

<sup>79</sup> R. W. Williamson, *The Mafulu*, 1912, 177.



with their "toimyo" (pet-animals) or "hisa" (children). The animal or child begins by eating, usually yucca, and then it "sings" or "speaks" the song in question. The names of the "fathers" are usually slightly altered equivalents of the names of the animals with which they are in intimate mystical connection.<sup>80</sup> Moreover the parent-child relations as manifested in suckling refers not only to smaller animals (dog, pig) and all sorts of other mammals but even to the bears sacrificed at the feast by the Ainu.<sup>81</sup>

## 7. THE DOMESTICATION OF CATTLE

The attitude of primitive pastoral people to their stock shows that cattle-breeding is far from being a simple economic question. Cattle-breeding tribes are cattle loving tribes. The Dinka never slaughter their cows (like the Egyptians) but when sick they are carefully tended till they die a natural death. In this case they are eaten but even then the owner is too sad to partake of the flesh. Cattle are dearer to the Dinka than wife or child.<sup>82</sup> Here and there a fat ox, tethered to a withered tree may be observed beside the hut of a wealthy Dinka. This is a white ox and its horns are artificially bent to opposite sides. This is the *marwki*, the pride of his master in the eyes of the village.<sup>83</sup>

Seligman tells us that every Dinka has a cattle name. These names are chosen by the men themselves and are based on the color or some other peculiarity of their pet ox, i.e., the beast given by his father to each youth when he enters his age-class. For instance a lad possessing an ox called Manyang, a name referring to the crocodile (from "ma" male and "nyang" crocodile) because the crocodile is regarded as more or less brindled, takes the name Magor, "gor" being the brindled mongoose. The owner of an ox Majak (jak=pelican) may take the name Anoklek (nok,=to vomit, lek=fish). That is, a man's name is derived from the name of his muor-cien or

<sup>80</sup> K. Ta. Preuss, *Religion und Mythologie der Uitoto*, 1921, I, 127.

<sup>81</sup> G. E. Nordenskiöld, *Indianerleben*, 1912, 56. Th. Koch-Grünberg, *Zwei Jahre unter den Indianern*, 1901, 482, 484. D. MacRitchie, "The Aino," *Internationales Archiv für Ethnographie*, 1892, 18, 19, 28, 41.

<sup>82</sup> J. G. Frazer, *Spirits of the Wild*, II, 1912, 38, quoting G. Schweinfurth, *Heart of Africa*, I, 163, 166.

<sup>83</sup> J. G. Frazer, *l. c.*, II, 39.



leading ox. "It is difficult to describe their importance to their masters or the love and care the latter have for their beasts, but it is certainly no exaggeration to say that it amounts to what psychologists would term 'identification.'"<sup>84</sup> The Bari have a special word for boasting with these favorite animals in such a way as to taunt others.<sup>85</sup> The Nandi tell us that they love their cattle more than anything in the world, they talk to them, pet or coax them and their grief is great when a favorite sickens or dies.<sup>86</sup> According to Beech "the Suk lives for his cattle and everything is done to make them an object of reverence." An ox with one horn pointing forward and one backward is called a "kamar." Every fighting man is supposed to have one of these, those who have none are taunted.<sup>87</sup> The Oromo regard their cattle as forming a part of their soul.<sup>88</sup> The respect the Batussi pay to their cattle far exceeds even their realistic value as stock or capital the interest of which (milk) they live on. The whole psychic and social life turns on the question of cattle; they are the very fiber of the social order and the objects of a mystic cult.<sup>89</sup>

It is not difficult to find the origin of these emotional values. The bovine herd is a reduplication of human society based on the Oedipus complex and the reverence paid to cattle is due to Father Bull and Mother Cow. According to a story of the Kabyl Tribe in North Africa in the beginning there was a wild buffalo and a young buffalo cow. The bull had intercourse with the cow and in due time a male calf was born. The male calf tried to have intercourse with his mother but she shoved him back with her horns for she was pregnant again. Then the young bull was afraid and ran away.

The young bull comes to the land of human beings and after having been told that a young cow, a sister of his, has been born he rushes back to his parents. He has intercourse with his mother and sister and in an open battle proves himself stronger than his

<sup>84</sup> C. G. and Brenda Z. Seligman, *Pagan Tribes of the Nilotic Sudan*, 1932, 169.

<sup>85</sup> *Idem*, l. c., 244. This is the typical "sagari" attitude at Duau.

<sup>86</sup> A. C. Hollis, *The Nandi*, 1909, 20, 22.

<sup>87</sup> M. W. H. Beech, *The Suk, their Language and Folklore*, 1911, 8, 9.

<sup>88</sup> Ph. Paulitschke, *Ethnographie Nordost Afrikas*, 1893, II, 56.

<sup>89</sup> H. Meyer, *Die Barundi*, Institut für Volkerkunde, 1916, 44. Cf. for further data M. J. Herskovits, "The Cattle Complex in East Africa," *Am. Anthr.*, XXVIII.



father. The Old Bull ran away to the rocks at Haither. His semen was ejaculated into the cavity of a rock and this was the origin of all wild animals. Rock-drawings represent the mythical Father of the Buffalo and people sacrifice to him for rain, crops and children. After having ruled the herd and cohabited with his mother and sisters for some time, the Young Bull, now an old bull, came to the houses of man and stopped there for the sake of warmth and food.<sup>90</sup>

It is partly from the observation of wild cattle and horses that Atkinson evolved his "Primal Law." Possibly the primitive hunter tribes were also in a position to observe in the lives of these animals the struggle of the Old Bull or Stallion for the mastery of the herd. What took place before their eyes was a particularly "manifest" version of their own latent Oedipus complex. At any rate we can show that the emotional value of cattle is based on the symbolic function of these animals as representing the parental *imagines* and the Oedipus complex.

In Egypt we have Osiris the Bull and his sister wife Isis, the cow, and the cow goddess Hathor, or House or Horus, as representing love and motherhood.<sup>91</sup> The Pharaoh, himself often called a Bull by his subjects, lived in incest and two outstanding features of African royalty are the symbolic equation of king and bull and the incestuous marriage of the king.<sup>92</sup> The gods of Egypt are called "Bull of his Mother" which means that the god has intercourse with his own mother and thus procreates himself.<sup>93</sup> The association of cattle and royalty is a returning feature of African societies and this connection may be either based on the rôle of the king as calf as son of the Bull Father and Cow Mother or as the identification with the paternal bull. The diet of the Banyoro kings was strictly

<sup>90</sup> L. Frobenius, "Atlantis," *I. Volksmärchen der Kabylen*, 1921, 64-69.

<sup>91</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *Osiris and the Egyptian Resurrection*, 1911, I, 397; II, 281. *Idem*, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, 1904, I, 428-437.

<sup>92</sup> G. Róheim, *Animism, Magic and the Divine King*, 1930, 224. The first thing done by the King of Ruanda after his accession to the throne is to drink milk. J. Roscoe, *The Bagesu and Other Tribes of the Uganda Protectorate*, 1924, 189. The king of Kenel Cunil (Ulster, Ireland) is reborn from a white mare. J. G. Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, 1919, I, 416, Giraldus Cambrensis, *Topography of Ireland*, 25.

<sup>93</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, 1904, I, 362, 363.



regulated by ancient custom. They might not touch mutton or vegetables and they subsisted on beef and milk, but chiefly on milk. The royal herd of cows was sacred and they were guarded from contact with other cows. Nine cows were always chosen as specially sacred animals from this herd and it is from these that the king received his supply of milk. The boy who brought them to pasture was called "The Caller" as he had to call out to the people to get out of the way of the sacred herd. Strict chastity had to be observed by this herd's boy whose life was bound up with the life of the king. To strike this boy was punishable with death because anything that happened to him affected the king. For the same reason he had to guard himself against anything that would draw blood from his body and the magical bond between his person and the king was constituted by the fact that he drunk what was left over from the king's milk supply.<sup>94</sup> In Madagascar there is a close connection between cattle and royalty. It is taboo to kill a red bull (the kind used for sacrifice) with a spear, because according to the legend, a man once speared a red bull but the animal was only wounded and it ran away. It rushed at a wild pace, overturning everything as it went, and it wounded the king with its horn and the king died of the wound. If somebody breaks the taboo, the king dies. The connection between bull sacrifice and regicide is evident from the closing sentence of the legend which explains the origin of the Fandroana (new year festival); the place of the bull sacrifice is the cemetery of an extinguished line of kings.<sup>95</sup> In some districts of Haussaland the dead king was enveloped in the hide of a bull while the successor was smeared with the bull's blood.<sup>96</sup> Another prominent feature of the cattle culture area is the taboo on women. For instance a Thonga woman may not eat the cooked blood of cattle. Nubile girls during the period of initiation may not approach the oxen kraal, nor look at the oxen; the cattle would be attacked by a bad cough and get thin.<sup>97</sup> In South Africa in general a woman who is not related by blood to the owner of

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<sup>94</sup> J. Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu*, 1915, 9. 10.

<sup>95</sup> A. van Gennep, *Tabou et Totemisme a Madagascar*, 1904, 240, 241.

<sup>96</sup> Tremearne, *The Ban of the Bori*, 1914, 38.

<sup>97</sup> H. A. Junod, *The Life of a South African Tribe*, 1913, I, 49.



the kraal may not touch the milk-sac.<sup>98</sup> This is significant because it indicates a tjurunga-like function of cattle in the social psychology or culture in question. Whatever is taboo to women symbolizes "value" because these values are derived from deflected unconscious libidinal strivings.

It seems probable that the domestication of cattle was brought about by the cult of cattle, or by cattle totemism, that is by the displacement of the Oedipus complex to cattle. A wild animal will become domesticated if it is not hunted. The situation we project into the past must have been something like the existing situation among the cattle breeders of North-East-Africa.

The Masai, when they all had cattle, did not eat game but only hunted such fierce carnivorous beasts as preyed on their cattle and consequently the herds of wild graminivorous animals grew extraordinarily tame all over the Masai country and it was no uncommon sight to see antelopes, zebras and gazelles, grazing peacefully without a sign of fear among the domestic cattle near the Masai kraals. There are, however, two exceptions to this rule. They hunt the eland and the buffalo since they consider these a kind of cattle, and therefore they may be lawfully killed and eaten by cattle breeders.<sup>99</sup>

The tribes in question are cattle breeders who abstain from other game, because they regard such as *infra dig*. Evidently in the same way as a real Papuan *esaesa* who has stores of the best yam would not deign to live on wild vegetables. But in the pre-pastoral period men must have abstained from killing wild cattle which then became tame cattle for some other reason. In an Australian tribe every clan has a different totem. But if we suppose tribes in which the clans all venerated cattle or all had cattle totems and therefore abstained from chasing and killing cattle, the wild ancestors of our tame cattle might have become tame in the same way as wild gazelles and antelope in our own days get used to hovering about the kraals of the Masai.

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<sup>98</sup> D. Kidd, *The Essential Kafir*, 1904, 238.

<sup>99</sup> J. G. Frazer, *Folk-Lore in the Old Testament*, 1919, III, 159. A. C. Hollis, *The Masai*, 1905, 319. M. Merker, *Die Masai*, 1904, 33, 170. M. Weiss, *Die Völkertämme in Norden Deutsch-Ostafrikas*, 1910, 354, 380. S. L. Hinde and H. Hinde, *The Last of the Masai*, 1901, 77, 84, 120. I. Roscoe, *The Northern Bantu*, 1915, 85, 108, 137.



A kind of cattle totemism has been described among the Banyoro. Among fourteen pastoral clans we find eight with cow totems. Thus the totem may be cows with red marks on the back, milch cow which can be with the bull, cows with humps, red and white cows, milch cows with calf for a second time, cows with straight horns, cows which have drunk salt water and cows of a particular color (mbasi).<sup>100</sup> One of the other six clans has as its totem the "tongues of animals." This is the kind of totem called by Frazer a "split totem" (part of an animal as totem). Originally this split totem must have been "tongues of cows" and that again is a substitute for cows. Two of the remaining totems, the bushbuck and the grasshopper are probably due to intermixture with non-pastoral tribes as they are conspicuous among the totems of the mixed clans. The two remaining totems are specially significant for they stand in the same relation to the cow totems as the latent contents of a dream to its manifest content, as the symbolized concept to the symbol. These totems are a "nursing mother" and a "woman who enters a house, solicits a man and is afterwards found to be with child." This show that the latent content underlying all these totems is the mother-child situation and the primal scene, *i.e.*, the relation of a man to his mother. "Milch cow which has been with a bull" is exactly the same thing expressed in the language of animal symbolism. Another typical cow tribe are the Bahima. Eleven of the fourteen totems are parts of the cow (cow's tongue, cows with black spots, etc.), one is a monkey and the two remaining ones are again connected with birth and motherhood. One of these is twins: "when a woman gives birth to twins, they desert the kraal and place the mother and her twins with the parents." The other is "the human breast." When a woman gives birth to a female child they bring a piece of cow dung put upon it a little human milk and throw the dung into the kraal to be trampled by the cows.<sup>101</sup>

The Herero are genuine cattle nomads just like the tribes of the Masai stock. Cattle breeding is a real passion with them; it is the principal aim of their life. Their phantasy dwells on their cattle day and night. They live and die for it, they compose songs in honor

<sup>100</sup> J. G. Frazer, *Totemism and Exogamy*, 1910, II, 516.

<sup>101</sup> J. Roscoe, "The Bahimi, a Cow Tribe of Erkole," *Journ. Roy. Anthr.*, 1907, 97, 101. Frazer, *l. c.*, II, 536.



of it. A bond of sympathy unites the human being and the animal.<sup>102</sup> A great part of their cattle consists of holy cows and oxen and the holy animals do not belong to the living members of the tribe. They are the property of the ancestors, the *ovakuru*. For these herds the Herero are responsible to their ancestors. A large part of the herds consists of "praised oxen," that is, animals fattened for the sacrifice. Every tribe, clan and family has a stock of its own cows, which belong to the family altar. These supply the whole group with nourishment and they can not be sold without incurring the wrath of the ancestral spirits.<sup>103</sup> They and the sacred cattle came from the *omunboronga* tree in a single day. The tree is still regarded as their ancestor and grandfather, to injure it would be sacrilege.<sup>104</sup> The sacred huts contain the sacred objects of the tribe. Here we find the *ozundume* branches of the holy tree used at present to rekindle the holy fire when it goes out. Beside the holy tree, the Grandfather, they have a holy bush, the *omuvapu*. Branches of this bush are thrown upon the tree as a sacrifice. The holy tree represents the first ancestor, and the holy sticks or branches of the bush the more recent ancestors of the tribe. Every time a chief dies a stick is added to the bundle.<sup>105</sup> The sticks are all bound together with a "certain part" (penis?) of the holy bull, which is sacrificed for this occasion. There is also a first Omusisi or holy bull, the counterpart of the Tree Grandfather. Every tribe has an ancestral bull, an *omusisi*, a word derived from *sis*=*imago* as the bull procreates animals which are like himself of the holy color of the tribal cattle.<sup>106</sup>

It is not necessary to go into further detail. Whether man adopted domestic animals as children (dog) or acquired them by identifying them unconsciously with the father and mother (cattle, horse) we find that activities which are originally due to Id causes acquire a secondary Ego function in the course of human history.

<sup>102</sup> J. Irle, *Die Herero*, 1906, 58, 121.

<sup>103</sup> J. Irle, *l. c.*, 168.

<sup>104</sup> J. G. Frazer, *The Magic Art*, II, 319, 320. Cf. D. Kidd, *The Essential Kafir*, 100.

<sup>105</sup> J. Irle, *l. c.*, 77.

<sup>106</sup> J. Irle, *l. c.*, 77, 80. The sticks representing the ancestors are used as fire drills, and the process of making fire is called coitus. Cf. Frazer, *The Magic Art*, 1911, II, 218.



Having thus analyzed the main "professions" of mankind, the elements that form the seemingly practical core of group-living, we find that they are all more or less distorted or projected equivalents of the infantile situation. It is not necessary to give a complete induction for every analyst will find this view confirmed in every clinical case. The life of our European or American middle classes gives wide scope for the choice of a profession, but whatever profession a man (or woman) may ultimately choose we find, as the latent element of the choice, the infantile situation. A soldier is re-enacting his body-destruction phantasies or his Oedipus-complex, a lawyer makes a profession of the endopsychical struggle between Super-Ego, Id and Ego, a scientist is a voyeur prying into the secrets of Mother Nature, a painter continues to play with his feces—a writer of fiction never renounces his day-dreams, and so forth. In these cases we call the process sublimation.



### CHAPTER THREE

## SUBLIMATION AND CULTURE

### I. SUBLIMATION

Sublimation of instinct is an "especially conspicuous feature of cultural evolution; it is this that makes it possible for the higher mental operations, scientific, artistic, ideological activities to play such an important part in civilized life."<sup>1</sup> It is certainly evident that a theory on the origin and function of culture is incomplete if it does not include a theory of sublimation. In her book on the "Ego and the Mechanisms of Defense" Anna Freud defines sublimation as the tenth mechanism of defense, as the characteristic attitude of normalcy.<sup>2</sup>

For the present we can avoid all controversial aspects of the sublimation problem<sup>3</sup>, notably the question as to how it is related to repression. In psychoanalytic literature the word is used either as a noun or as a verb. We are trying to find out what the process of sublimation is, but we all know what we mean by *a sublimation*, i.e., using the word as a noun. Language is a sublimation and so is a building; the system of primitive medicine is a sublimation, and so is a modern invention. Now it is obvious that if we use the word in this sense various defense mechanisms may be active in producing a sublimation. In taboo we find the mechanism of isolation; in primitive medicine, introjection; in the scapegoat ritual it is projection. The same mechanisms are also characteristic of certain neuroses or psychoses. Thus in compulsion neurosis we have isolation; in paranoia, projection; in melancholia, introjection. Yet a witch hunt in an African community or in the Middle Ages, although it is similar to paranoia, is also a sublimation. The same is valid for a primitive mourning ritual with the mechanism and content of melancholia.

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<sup>1</sup> S. Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, 1930, 63.

<sup>2</sup> A. Freud, *Das Ich und die Abwehrmechanismen*, 1936, 52.

<sup>3</sup> S. Bernfeld, "Zur Sublimierungstheorie," *Imago*, XVII, 333. R. Sterba, "Zur Problematik der Sublimierungslehre," *Int. Z. für Psa.*, XVI, 376. G. Róheim, *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, 1934, 244, and in a forthcoming paper on "Sublimation" in *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*.



The difference between a neurosis and a sublimation is evidently the social aspect of the phenomenon. A neurosis isolates; a sublimation unites. In a sublimation something new is created—a house, or a community, or a tool—and it is created in a group or for the use of a group. We must therefore assume that the same defense mechanisms which under certain circumstances are active in the formation of a neurosis are also behind our various sublimations, plus something else that is super-added. This “something else” must be responsible for the trend towards the group which is so characteristic of sublimation.

Before we carry these considerations any further we must pave the way by repeating certain hypotheses and conclusions of Freud, Ferenczi and Hermann.

In discussing the derivation of the super-ego or ego-ideal from an introjected love-object Freud writes:

The transformation of object libido into narcissistic libido which takes place in this case is evidently connected with a relinquishing of the sexual goal with a desexualization—that is, a kind of sublimation. Furthermore, the question might be asked—and this problem would merit a detailed investigation—whether *this is not the general mechanism of sublimation in which, through the intermediary of the Ego, sexual object-libido is transformed into narcissistic libido and then re-directed towards a new goal?*<sup>4</sup>

Ferenczi has given us another theoretical tool in his discussion of the *genitopetal* and the *genitofugal* trend of the libido. In coitus an extreme tension is suddenly relieved and this is the explanation of the enormous pleasure sensation. At the same time we have also an “opposite current of the libido towards the body.” This recathecting of the whole organism with libido results in a feeling of happiness in which the organs find their reward for work and stimulation to further activity.<sup>5</sup>

In my book on *Animism, Magic and the Divine King* I have made an attempt to apply Ferenczi's theory of a genitofugal libido trend to the development of culture.<sup>6</sup> Genitopetal libido is evidently

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<sup>4</sup> S. Freud, “Das Ich und das Es,” *Gesammelte Schriften*, VI, 374. (My italics.)

<sup>5</sup> S. Ferenczi, *Versuch einer Genitaltheorie*, 1924, 51, 52.

<sup>6</sup> G. Róheim, *Animism, Magic and the Divine King*, 1930.



libido directed *towards the object* and genitofugal libido is libido *flowing back from the object to the body*.

Finally we have the viewpoint of I. Hermann. Starting from the importance of grasping as a partial impulse of the libido, Hermann finds that through the inevitably occurring maternal frustrations libido becomes bi-polarized with a "grasping" "seeking" antithesis—that is, a trend back towards the mother and an opposite trend of finding new mother substitutes.

Hermann has also shown what happens to libido in suspense between the archaic and the new object. It is reinvested in the ego, retransformed into narcissistic libido.<sup>7</sup> In a discussion of Australian puberty rites I have shown how the separation period in which the boy is separated from the mother and not yet admitted into the company of women is characterized by phallic-narcissistic rites and symbolic representations of the penis.<sup>8</sup>

Actually we see in many neurotics a violent oscillation between the narcissistic and the object-seeking attitudes. We suspect that in the mechanism of normalcy, in sublimation this oscillation must disappear and something more stable must take its place. I have analyzed pregnant women and young mothers and always found that their interests in their work or any cultural hobby ceases and the embryo in their womb or their child reigns supreme in its stead. The original has here replaced the symbol—the child has taken the place of the cultural object.

In describing the culture of the Arapesh tribe, Margaret Mead has given us a vivid picture of a general maternal attitude as the dominant trend of a culture.

To the Arapesh, the world is a garden that must be tilled, not for one's self, not in pride and boasting, not for hoarding and usury, but that the yams and the pigs and most of all the children may grow. From this whole attitude flow many of the other Arapesh traits, the lack of conflict between the old and young, the lack of any expectation of jealousy or envy, the emphasis upon co-operation.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Cf. I. Hermann, "Sich-Anklammern Auf-Suche-gehn," *Int. Z. für Psa.*, XXII, 349. *Idem*, "Zur Triebbesetzung von Ich und Über Ich", *Int. Z. für Psa. und Imago*, XXV, 131. *Idem*, "Anklammerung, Feuer, Schamgefühl," *Int. Z. für Psa. und Imago*, XXVI, 252.

<sup>8</sup> G. Róheim, "Transition Rites," *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, XI, 336-374.

<sup>9</sup> M. Mead, *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies*, 1935, 135.



When I was doing field work with the Somali, one of the poets of this nomad tribe told me that before he invented, i.e., sang, one of his poems, he would always feel exactly like a pregnant woman. In Egyptian culture the sculptor who carved the portrait statues for the Egyptian tombs was called *sa'nbh*, "he who causes to live," and the word "to fashion" (ms) a statue is to all appearances identical with ms "to give birth."<sup>10</sup>

Our theory is evidently verging towards an identification of the child and the cultural object. In analysis we can observe what the child really means to the mother. In the child-mother situation, the mother re-lives her own infancy in the active instead of in the passive rôle. This transition from passivity to activity has its model in the early play of little girls.<sup>11</sup> A little girl plays with dolls; now she is the mother and the doll her baby. Her great anxiety is that of being left alone in the dark. Hence the famous game of the infant with the lost and refound object in which he is taking small doses of the trauma of separation and playing the rôle of the mother with the object as child,<sup>12</sup> and in general the to and fro, the separation and re-finding in infantile play activity.<sup>13</sup>

Women go through a second childhood with their children, only in inverted rôles. It is easy to see why this should be so in mankind. Our delayed infancy and permanently infantile nature determines a succession of situations modelled on the early infancy pattern. The function of motherhood is a biological datum but its prolongation in, and psychological function for the female is pre-eminently human.

And man? Man gives birth to culture<sup>14</sup> and plays with toys he takes very seriously. This, of course, is not to be taken literally. It is an analogy, not an explanation.

But we go back again to the child-mother situation as we find it in analysis. The child to the mother means herself in her own childhood, but also her own mother, or, if it is a boy, her father and her

<sup>10</sup> G. Elliott Smith, *The Evolution of the Dragon*, 1919, 25.

<sup>11</sup> R. Wälder, "The Psychoanalytic Theory of Play," *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, II, 208-224.

<sup>12</sup> S. Freud, "Jenseits des Lustprinzips," *Gesammelte Schriften*, VI, 199, 200.

<sup>13</sup> Fr. Buytendick, *Wesen und Sinn des Spiels*, 1933, 34.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Clark Wissler, *Man and His Culture*, 1923, 272.



husband. It is then a happy combination of narcissistic and object-erotic qualities. This is what Ferenczi has called parental eroticism.<sup>15</sup> Our theory therefore is *that the cultural object or a sublimation is half-way between the narcissistic and the object-erotic position, a stabilization point for the oscillation of libido.*

The great danger against which mankind has evolved culture is that of object loss, of being left alone in the dark.

Mankind, according to Freud, follows three main patterns to avoid unhappiness. The erotic persons are those "whose chief interest—the relatively largest amount of libido—is bestowed upon love-life. To love, and more particularly, to be loved, is all-important to them. They are mastered by the fear of losing love and are, therefore, especially dependent on others who have love to deny them. The second, or compulsive type is distinguished by the predominance of the super-ego. This type is mastered by the fear of conscience instead of by the fear of losing love, is, so to speak, rather inwardly than outwardly dependent, displays a high degree of self-reliance and becomes the actual and for the most part the conservative pillar of civilization."

The third type "quite justifiably called narcissistic is essentially negatively characterized. There is no tension between ego and super-ego. The chief interest is directed toward self-maintenance."<sup>16</sup>

The first type is evidently object dependent. As for the second, the difference is that here we have the introjected archaic love object instead of the real love object. And finally, if we pause to consider that clinically narcissism is always secondary narcissism, that is, the libido withdrawn from the object to the ego, we find that the third type is also a specific reaction to the original danger of separation.

Mankind has invented culture because of its delayed infancy or intolerance of tension. The cultural object, or sublimation, has a *Janus-like aspect*. It looks both ways, towards narcissism and object-eroticism. Thus the cultural object or sublimation is the super-organic equivalent of the child and the great festival of Christianity

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<sup>15</sup> S. Ferenczi, *Versuch einer Genitaltheorie*, 1924, 34.

<sup>16</sup> S. Freud, "Libidinal Types," *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, I, 1932, 4.



is Christmas, the birthday of the infant God.<sup>17</sup> If a sculptor makes a statue the process is narcissistic because it is he who has made it, because he admires himself as the maker. It is object-erotic because the statue ultimately represents somebody whom he loves, and also because "making" it a substitute for coitus. He does not know that it is a substitute. The genital striving is present, but repressed.

In a case published by Lorand this functional value and origin of inventions is quite clear.

"The patient remembered that at the age of four or earlier he had been left alone so much that he was forced to invent various methods of amusement." The dreams published by Lorand show that his object or inventions represent himself in his relations to his mother or the introjected primal scene, reproduced by infantile omnipotence to ward off loneliness.<sup>18</sup> A certain height of ego-organization and the elimination of genital satisfaction enter among the necessary conditions of a cultural product or sublimation. The onlookers are united to each other by sharing the same pleasure and the repression of genitality with its trend towards exclusiveness mitigates the danger of mutual aggression.

Hitherto, however, we have been arguing in two opposite directions. First, we examined the "professions" evolved by man in the course of his history, that is, human attempts to master reality, and in doing so we have found that they are based on the same mechanisms that form various types of neuroses. Then in focussing our attention more on the cultural product than on the process we have postulated a separate mechanism for sublimation and we have described this mechanism as the formation of a *narcissistic-object erotic object* as *mediator* and focus of stabilization. If we attempted to "grasp" other human beings simply by a direct libidinal trend and then stopped half-way between loving others and loving ourselves matters would be very simple. Perhaps there are some cases of sublimation which can be described in these terms. Others, however, and these seem to form the bulk of our culture, are not

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<sup>17</sup> On the fore-runners of the Mother Goddess and the Divine Infant of E. Norden, *Die Geburt des Kindes*, 1924, 24, and F. Baur, "Eileithyia," *Philologus, Supplement*, VIII, 451.

<sup>18</sup> S. Lorand, "A Note on the Psychology of the Inventor," *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, III, 30-41.



derived from the direct libidinal trends by which we approach our human environment or which we withdraw from our human environment. We approach our human environment through our infantile anxiety situations or defense mechanisms erected on the basis of these anxiety situations. We do not always try to "clutch" our neighbor (Hermann) thus accepting him as a substitute for the mother, but we ask him, are you afraid of the same things that I am? In doing so, however, we are dominated by the object-seeking tendencies; we show that we are willing to be neurotic in groups. Instead of (or besides) transforming his body destruction phantasies into hypochondriac complaints which refer to the inside of his own body,<sup>19</sup> the medicine man holds the whole group together by relieving every individual of the same anxiety<sup>20</sup> and presents the material in form sufficiently remote from the original to permit the union (mutual "clutching" or identification) round a certain object, concept, cult or person (for instance the medicine man). We postulate therefore: (1) The formation of an infantile<sup>21</sup> anxiety system (2) and endopsychic "healing" i.e., object-loving tendency. (3) The formation of a substitute object half-way between the narcissistic and the object-erotic trends; *oscillation is stabilized*. (4) re-elaboration of this object on a level sufficiently remote from the original to make group-formation possible.

This somewhat complicated system<sup>22</sup> facilitates the appraisal of the relation of neurosis to culture. Looking at the question from an "animal" or "Id" view point of health I have called culture, or the process of becoming human in general a "neurosis."<sup>23</sup> Objections have been raised by the anthropologist<sup>24</sup> and the psychoanalyst.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Body-destruction-hypochondria. Suggestion made by Dr. Schönberger.

<sup>20</sup> By presenting his own body-destruction phantasies to the group in their restitutive aspect.

<sup>21</sup> The poet forms a group by presenting day dreams in an acceptable form. (Cf. S. Freud, "Der Dichter und das Phantasieren," *Gesammelte Schriften*, X, 229), i.e., by depriving masturbation phantasies of their solitary character.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. E. Glover, "Sublimation—a group of mechanisms." E. Glover, "Sublimation Substitution and Social Anxiety," *Int. Journ. of Psa.*, XII, 265.

<sup>23</sup> G. Róheim, *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, 1934. *Idem*, "Freud and Anthropology," *Man*, 1936, 98, 141.

<sup>24</sup> M. Mead, "Review of 'The Riddle of the Sphinx'" in *Character and Personality*, 1935, 90.

<sup>25</sup> Prince Peter of Greece, "Psychoanalysis and Anthropology," *Man*, XXXVI, 1936, 181.



In the light of the present paper culture or sublimation is a series of *defense mechanisms in a favorable phase of stabilization between narcissism and object-cathexis*. The result of these researches in culture is in complete agreement with the views of Dr. Glover on normality.

The "normal" person resists all affective examination of his stability for a very natural if no longer justifiable reason. He resists it because his normality represents a victory over an original state of madness.<sup>26</sup>

For the adult this stable rampart system (against infantile anxieties) represents normality, apart from a little cultural French polishing adult normality is the end product of child defence.<sup>27</sup>

To repeat: normality may be a form of madness which goes unrecognized because it happens to be a good adaptation to reality.<sup>28</sup>

If we call normality or culture, which is the normal state of group living for human beings, a neurosis we must at the same time admit that it is a neurosis of a special kind. Instead of parricide and incest we have the super-ego and group-formation, instead of "clutchings" to archaic objects we have "seekings" of new substitute objects, instead of body-destruction we have activities of the "reparation" type, instead of an introvert we have an extrovert attitude. In the case of the neurotic the picture is dominated by a tendency towards isolation, by aggression and narcissism. The behavior and life of the neurotic adult represents the anxiety aspect of the infantile situation, the child deprived of the mother. On the other hand in the case of the normal adult who lives in a social group the picture is dominated by love, successful identification and object-cathexis. Success in life is a repetition of infantile wish fulfillment and of the satisfaction gained by the child in the child-mother situation.

Somebody might ask how it happens that these repetitions of the mother-child situation are also ego-syntonic, *i.e.*, that man not only prods the soil with a stick but actually puts things into the earth that multiply and feed him or that besides keeping pets we have eventually learned to breed cattle? The answer lies in the fact that the child obtains *both pleasure and nourishment* at the mother's

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<sup>26</sup> E. Glover, "Medico-psychological aspects of normality." *British Journal of Psychology*, XXIII (General Section), 1932, 156.

<sup>27</sup> E. Glover, *l. c.*, 158.

<sup>28</sup> E. Glover, *l. c.*, 165.



breast. It is the nature of our species to master reality on a libidinal basis and we create a society, an environment in which this and only this is possible. It is a long way from the hunter who obtains direct satisfaction of his hunger by killing an animal to the person who lives by sharing his infantile phantasies with others. The history of mankind shows the increasing tendency of retarded growth, the increasing replacement of the stimulus-reaction pattern of action, inherited from our pre-human ancestors by the retardational, or infantile, symbiotic mode of mastering reality.

If our sublimations are stabilized "neurosis" formations we can understand both the rôle they play in health and in disease. In clinical analysis we observe either the super-accentuation of cultural aspects and functions or (and) the inhibition of cultural (ego-syntonic) activities. A neurotic who reads books relating to his profession after office-hours because he must get on in his job and gives up everything else clings to his ego-syntonic activity or sublimation with anxiety because of his guilt feelings and transforms his professional sublimation into a punishment dictated by his super-ego. The same guilt feeling may also appear as an inhibition of cultural sublimation because of the libidinal satisfaction contained in these sublimations. It is therefore correct to say that nobody is clinically and "humanly" healthy if he can not sublimate and it is also true that neurotics tend to over-emphasize sublimation at the expense of direct wish fulfillment.

In the present chapter we have tended to identify cultural activities and sublimation. The reason for doing so lies in the reason for writing this book. When looking at the situation from a remote, biological point of view I wrote of culture as a neurosis, my critics objected. Attempting to reply to this criticism I now defined culture with greater precision as a psychic defense system. Since this view has also been questioned,<sup>29</sup> I have taken up the question again in the present book and tried to analyze culture in some of its aspects which are most ego-syntonic, most useful and therefore appear to be remote from defense mechanisms. The result of this investigation is to confirm me in the view that *defence systems against anxiety are the stuff that culture is made of* and that therefore specific cultures

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<sup>29</sup> Cf. M. Mead and Prince Peter of Greece as quoted above.



are structurally similar to specific neuroses. This view of psycho-analytical anthropology was really the starting point of the whole problem. However other processes must follow the formation of these neurosis-systems to produce sublimations and culture. The psyche as we know it, is formed by the introjection of primary objects (super-ego) and the first contact with environment (ego). Society itself is knitted together by projection of these primarily introjected objects or concepts followed by a series of subsequent introjections and projections. In my book on the divine king I have tried to show the social function of the medicine man, the king and the scapegoat, as representatives, wish projections of the desires of their patients, subjects, or of the religious community. The divine king lives in incest as his subjects would like to,<sup>30</sup> and he represents, what they no longer can attain, infantile omnipotence, but he also suffers death for their unconscious desires. Towards the end of a training analysis the patient, now himself an analyst, has the following dream:

*I dream that I go for a walk with Hitler. He is quite friendly, and he talks about buying a certain public-park. He will pay some hundred thousand marks for it. It is cheap but he can get it for that because he is in power. I am not indignant.*

*I am dead and priests of all kinds—Lutheran, Jewish, etc., are burying me.*

The park is the place where I live (the park in Budapest).

He thinks the analyst gives less to the patient than the patient gives to the analyst but he can do it because he represents the father. He accepts parental coitus (the abuse of power) as a fact without indignation; he is about to be married himself, but not without anxiety, because the dream represents marriage as death. The question of church marriage arises, hence the priests of all kinds in the dream. Then he asks for technical advice and talks about a patient of his who is a kind of criminal character. This patient manages to be a criminal character by projecting his super-ego to others. There must be people who are honest instead of him, people who represent his ideals. In the case of the "analyst-patient" the situation is the reverse; he is honest or adult or normal, and others are the

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<sup>30</sup> Cf. G. Róheim, *Animism, Magic and the Divine King*, 1930, 224.



bearers of his criminal or infantile or neurotic personality, his scapegoats.<sup>31</sup>

Society is formed by people "clutching" or introjecting each other as substitute parental imago's, as part-realizations of their own neurotic systems or on the basis of identifications as sharing the same anxieties and ways of dealing with these anxieties. The paraphernalia and variations of our culture have been produced by a balancing system between object erotic and narcissistic tendencies super-added to group-neurosis formation. In the accent laid on the group and in the creative aspect of the process of sublimation we may certainly recognize a healing tendency in culture and sublimations. It has recently been argued that religion is not a disease (Freud) but the cure of the disease. Dr. Suttie writes:

Broadly speaking, religion, which like mental illness, springs from dissatisfactions of development and particularly from the surrender of infancy is mainly concerned in its higher forms to better our affective relationship to each other (*i.e.*, is ethical).<sup>32</sup> Unlike mental illness proper it is a social not an individual and selfish attempt and hence differs also in that it expresses itself in social institutions rather than in misery alienation and dementia.<sup>33</sup>

This is quite true but we must not forget that diseases themselves are also attempted cures,<sup>34</sup> and the aim of the symptom is to avoid anxiety. There is a difference in the degree of success but fundamentally we find that the disease and the cure of the disease are successive phases or identical.

However there are other aspects of our culture which do not come under this headline. They are not even an attempted cure, *i.e.*, an ego-syntonic defence mechanism, but purely and simply group neurosis with no secondary illness gain or very little of it. These phenomena are built up on the patterns of paranoia and will eventually be dealt with in future papers.

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<sup>31</sup> Cf. Th. Reik, *Der Unbekannte Mörder*, 1932, on the judge and the criminal. The training analysis was according to the Budapest system, in which training analyst and control analyst are the same person.

<sup>32</sup> Or as I would put it, attempts to repeat the wish-fulfilment aspects of the mother-child situation.

<sup>33</sup> Jan. D. Suttie, *The Origins of Love and Hate*, 1935, 127.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. S. Freud, *Gesammelte Schriften*, VIII, 423 (Über einen autobiographisch beschriebenen Fall von Paranoia).



Bearing mainly in mind the aspects of human culture we have been discussing in this paper we see that they have one feature in common. They unite one human being to the other, they are cunning devices adopted by man, the infant, against being left alone. Shall we say that "*primus in orbe deos fecit timor*"? We can do so but we must not forget that this anxiety is the outcome of our infantile passive object love of our desire to be beloved.<sup>35</sup> Born prematurely (retardation) we cling to the pleasure-giving part of our environment. Perhaps nobody will contradict me if I maintain that ultimately, *civilization is a series of institutions evolved for the sake of security*. For the infant this means security from ego and from libidinal dangers. There is no differentiation, the mothers nipple means both pleasure and nourishment. This is ultimately the reason why cooperation desired on a libidinal (infantile) basis is also ego-syntonic. This is also my answer to those who might accuse me of one-sidedness in attempting to interpret cultural ego functions in terms of libido displacement. Some of the interpretations we give refer properly speaking to the early infantile situation to the period before the differentiation of the Ego and the Id.

## 2. THE CULT OF THE DEAD AND CIVILIZATION

We find that some kind of mortuary ritual exists in all human communities. In analyzing the death and mourning ceremonies of the Normanby Islanders I have tried to show that for the mourner the loss of the dead relation is a repetition of the loss of love suffered by the infant, *viz.*, *the separation from the mother*. This problem has been admirably discussed in a recent paper by Felix Deutsch. Final object loss<sup>36</sup> is the danger the dying have to face.

What is it that gives religious-minded people tranquillity in face of death, and what gave Socrates such tranquillity? They have detached themselves from object-relationships to this world and have put their trust in another world, a beyond. Before Crito handed him the goblet, when Xanthippe appeared, holding their child in her arms, weeping and

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<sup>35</sup> Cf. H. Christoffel, "Exhibitionism and Exhibitionists," *Int. Journ. of Ps.*, XVII, 327. Little children may die from the withdrawal of love.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. Horace, "*Cedes coemitis saltibus et domo, Villaque, flavus quam Tiberis lavit*". *Carminum Liber secundus*, III, 19. Ad Qu. Delium, Death is an, "aeternum exilium".



complaining—he said to his pupils. “Look what a fuss she is making. Send her away.”<sup>37</sup>

Dying . . . means not only that one must desert the object of one's love, but also must be deserted by that object. This loss of the object arouses dread and anxiety, if no substitute can be provided. To avert this anxiety, many of the moribund free themselves from the ambivalence of their attitude towards their “nearest and dearest”, clinging to them, and can die peacefully only when all are assembled around them.<sup>38</sup>

Dr. Deutsch describes cases in which euthanasia or easy death was made possible by a delusion, the essence of which was a regression to infantile love objects to the sister or mother.

We have seen that the dying seek in various ways to achieve reconciliation with what the Greeks call *ananké*, the inexorable necessity of departure from life. These various ways are: by gratification of the reactive aggressive impulses; by a last uplifting of narcissistic self-satisfaction, by liberation from anxiety through a disburdenment from the sense of guilt by way of masochistic self-punishment; by a last clinging to or conversely by an abandonment of object relationships; and by seeking consolation in the anticipation of new, nonambivalent relationships in another world.<sup>39</sup>

Body destruction phantasies are due to pleasure-privation, to the withdrawal of the nipple. The infant wishes to destroy the body of the “bad” mother and therefore fears the same fate. The decomposition of the corpse signifies this, “yes, such a thing is possible, it is the impending fate of all mortals.” Hence precautions are taken to protect the body to ward off decomposition, to deny the danger.

To be alone is the great danger. To obviate it, mankind has invented the psychotic hallucination of a world to come where the dead will be in company with other spirits of the departed and the obsessional neurotic ceremonial of mourning and ancestral cult thereby keeping company with the dead. The countries in which these elements have been developed more than anywhere else are also the cradles of our civilization.

Egypt is the home of mummies and pyramids.

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<sup>37</sup> F. Deutsch, “Euthanasia: a clinical study,” *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, V, 1936, 360.

<sup>38</sup> F. Deutsch, *l. c.*, 361.

<sup>39</sup> F. Deutsch, *l. c.*, 363.



Special care was taken to protect the dead and this led to the invention of coffins and to the making of a definite tomb, the size of which rapidly increased as more and more ample supplies of food and other offerings were made. . . . From the outset the Egyptian embalmer was clearly inspired by two ideals: (a) to preserve the actual tissues of the body with a minimum disturbance of its superficial appearance; and (b) to preserve a likeness of the deceased as he was in life.<sup>40</sup>

Elliot Smith then proceeds to show how many of the arts and crafts of Egyptian civilization can be directly derived from the efforts made to preserve the post-mortal integrity of the body.

The god of the dead was Anpu or Anubis the jackal. Jackals prowl near the graves; they feed on carrion. A real jackal would tear the body into pieces but the god, a sublimated jackal, preserves it, protects the corpse against destruction.

Tradition declared that Anubis embalmed the body of Osiris and that he swathed it in the linen swathings which were woven by Isis and Nephthys for their brother; and it was believed that this work was so thoroughly well performed under the direction of Horus and Isis and Nephthys that it resisted the influences of time and decay. In the Book of the Dead, the deceased is told (CLXX, 4) that "Anpu, who is upon his hill, hath set thee in order and he hath fastened for thee thy swathings, thy throat is the throat of Anubis (CLXXII, 22) and thy face is like that of Anubis (CLXXXI, 9)."<sup>41</sup>

When Anubis produces the heart of the dead for judgment this is more in keeping with his original rôle as a corpse-eater and when he takes care that the deceased should not be handed over to the demon called "Eater of the Dead" he is really protecting the corpse against himself.<sup>42</sup>

The dead were supposed to be attacked by snakes and the Book of the Dead contained formulae written to preserve the dead from these demons.<sup>43</sup>

In the myth of Osiris, Anubis plays a subordinate role. However this myth itself contains evidence for the view that the immortality of the dead, the idea of mummification or body preservation is but

<sup>40</sup> G. Elliot Smith, *The Evolution of the Dragon*, 1913, 15. G. Foucart, *Histoire des Religions*, 1912, 245.

<sup>41</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, 1904, II, 263.

<sup>42</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *l. c.*, II, 262.

<sup>43</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *l. c.*, II, 272. For a late Christian version of these fiends see E. A. Wallis Budge, *Egyptian Ideas of the Future Life*, 1900, 113.



the reverse or reparation aspect of body-destruction phantasies. For the god Osiris, mutilated and dismembered by Seth and his followers is the prototype of all dead mortals.

When Osiris ascends the throne, he begins to civilize the savage Egyptians. He wins the hearts of all by song and music, introduces agriculture and teaches the people to respect the laws and to reverence the gods. By a ruse Seth induces him to lie in a richly decorated coffin and then they suddenly close the coffin and let it float down the river to the sea.<sup>44</sup> His sister-wife Isis finds him with the aid of children who had seen the floating coffin. She also finds the child of her sister, Nephthys procreated by Osiris. Osiris had cohabited with Nephthys because he mistook her for her sister Isis. The dog who helped her to find the child and kept watch on the way was Anubis. Isis having left the coffin to visit her son Horus, Seth found it and rended the body into fourteen parts which he distributed all over the country. All these members were subsequently found by Isis excepting the genital of the god. The phallos having been thrown into the water was eaten by the fish called Oxyrynchos.<sup>45</sup> According to the Chapter CXIII of the Book of the Dead the same fate befell Horus, the son of Isis and Osiris. The god had perished, *i.e.*, he had been mutilated and some of his members had been cast into the water. Isis invoked the aid of the crocodile god Sebek. The arms and the hands of Horus were found by the god and the fish which were under his rule. The region was called "Land of Fish" by Rá who ordained that the recovery of the hands of Horus should be commemorated at the festival of the "opening of the face" or "manifestation" of Horus on the first and fifteenth day of each month.<sup>46</sup>

The interpretation of mummification as a "reparation" phase of body-destruction is supported by historical data. It seems that in a period which preceded the age of mummification the corpse was cut into pieces like the mythical corpse of Osiris. The severed parts of the body were buried in cultivated land probably near the dead man's earthly residence. After a time when the flesh had disappeared the bones would be disinterred and finally buried on the edge of the cultivated soil in the sand of the desert. Gradually this peculiar pro-

<sup>44</sup> Plutarchos, *De Iside et Osiride*, 13.

<sup>45</sup> Plutarchos, *De Iside et Osiride*, 14-19.

<sup>46</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *Osiris*, 1911, I, 63.



ceeding was replaced by the opposite technique, *viz.*, mummification. Thousands of years afterwards when mummification was the general practice the formulae still tell us how the dead will get their severed head back in the other world. Corpses have been found that were first decapitated and then as if people had changed their minds the corpse was mummified and the head fixed back on it again. There was also a method that looks like a compromise between opposite tendencies. They let the flesh rot off the bones which were then reunited and bound together to form a mummy-shaped bundle.<sup>47</sup>

As we have said before, every human being was an Osiris, murdered by Set, thrown into the river, fished out again, cut into pieces and found a second time. The widow played the part of Isis in the funeral ceremonies, the sons officiated as Horus and the friends as Anubis and Thot.<sup>48</sup> What interests us specially in this connection is, however, that this body-destruction, the dismemberment of Osiris, was either a parallel phantasy to the idea of the corpse returning to the protection of its pre-natal environment or we must assume that in the unconscious this body-destruction and reparation was regarded as actually taking place in the womb. An inscription found on the roof of Hathor's temple at Denderah describes the ceremonies held in memory of the death of Osiris. For seven days the god remains in his shroud as a mummy, from the twenty-fourth of Choiak to the last day of that month. Then the god was believed to rest on the sycamore trees in the temple of the celestial Busiris. These seven days were regarded as equivalent to the seven days he spent in the womb of his mother Nut when the goddess was pregnant with him.<sup>49</sup> The goddess Nut was also iden-

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<sup>47</sup> F. Wiedmann, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Aegypter*, 1893, 20, 21, quoted in G. Róheim, *Animism, Magic and the Divine King*, 1930, 32. Until the latest days of the Egyptian religion the dead body which was to be prepared for mummification was first opened by means of a knife. (A Guide to the First and Second Egyptian Rooms. British Museum, Second Edition, 1904, 22.) The view quoted above from Wiedemann on early burial forms and advocated by some archeologists in the form that the early Egyptians were often cut up before burial and the flesh of certain limbs was sometimes eaten, is however, doubted by other authorities. (Cf., *ibid.*, 23.)

<sup>48</sup> A. Moret, *Mystères Egyptiennes*, 1913, 37.

<sup>49</sup> H. Brugsch, "Das Osiris Mysterium von Tentyra," *Zeitschrift für ägyptische Sprach- und Altertumskunde*, XIX, 1881, 96.



tified with the coffin, and the dead, by being put into the coffin were in reality put into the body of the goddess. The following inscription has been found on the lid of the coffin of Teti: "Nut, the shining one, the great one, sayeth: This is my son N. N. to whom I have given birth. Nut, the great vulture, declares: This is my beloved N. N. my son. I have given him the two horizons that he may grow powerful in them like Harachte (the infant Horus)." <sup>50</sup> At the fourth hour of the day the rebirth of Osiris in the other world was announced and victims were sacrificed. These victims symbolized Set and his allies and their skin served as a swathing for Osiris. This was the cradle of the god, whence he was reborn as a child or an animal. "Be welcome, Isis. Here is thy *meshent* the house where the divine *ka* renews life." Meshent is the skin, the hide of the sacrificed animal. This hide was also identified with Nut, mother of gods of Osiris and the dead <sup>51</sup> and also regarded as a separate goddess of childbirth.

Anubis the jackal was the presiding genius of these rites and his symbol was the hide of a beast attached to a pole. He arranged the sacrifice of the victims by whose hide the rebirth of Osiris was effected. According to the Book of the Dead, Anubis himself passed through the hide and lay in it in the position of an infant in the womb. <sup>52</sup> The deceased himself was supposed to pass through the hide of the victim but usually it was done by somebody else for him. Originally human beings seem to have been sacrificed as representatives of Set. Subsequently prisoners of war, usually Nubians, were substituted for the Egyptians. Afterwards the animals of Set were used, but they still played the part of the human victims. At the tomb of *Montu nerjhepshef* a human personage called the *Tikenou* appears on a sledge with the animal hide called *mest* or *meshent*. These words are derived from the radical *mes*=to be born. The *mest*, the heart of the sacrificed animal and the hair of the human *Tikenou* were burnt and supposed to ascend with the

<sup>50</sup> A. Rusch, *Die Entwicklung der Himmelsgöttin Nut zu einer Totengottheit*. Mitteilungen der Vorderasiatischen Gesellschaft, 1922, XXVII, 13.

<sup>51</sup> A favorite inscription on the cover of the coffin was "Spreadeth herself thy mother Nut over thee in her name of coverer of heaven, she maketh thee to be as a god without thine enemy." E. A. Wallis Budge, *Gods of the Egyptians*, II, 110.

<sup>52</sup> A. Moret, *Mystères Egyptiennes*, 1913, 31-33. On Set, cf. also G. A. Wainright, *The Sky-Religion in Egypt*, 1938.



defunct from the flames into the sky. The inventor of this magical proceeding was Anubis who appeared with the hide called *out* which was used for the same purpose as the *mest*. The word *out* can also mean the uterus and the human figure put into the hide assumes exactly the same position as the victim of the animal sacrifice or the embryo in the womb.<sup>53</sup> Osiris dies and he floats like Moses and other heroes<sup>54</sup> in a coffer on the water. When Isis looks for the chest containing her dead husband she finds a chest with a newborn child.<sup>55</sup> But there is another version of the story and in this version the body of Osiris is torn into pieces. Thus the Egyptians seem to have had two opposite views and perhaps practices with regard to post-mortal existence (one involving destruction and the other uterine regression, safety, protection). But the ceremonial uterus was made of the hide of the victim, and it is obvious that in order to wrap the dead in an animal hide that animal must first be killed. There is evidently ample evidence to confirm our conjecture that the Egyptian cult of the dead with its mummification, pyramid building, ancestral cult and other-world beliefs must be regarded as the reparation phase of typical body destruction phantasies. Just as the child wishes to tear something, an embryo, or penis, or feces, or milk out of its mother's body the Egyptians regarded the dead man as having returned to the uterus, where nevertheless he was in danger of being torn to pieces. In the dreams of pregnant women whom I have analyzed the fetus appears as a wild beast, a being who might claw or bite them and whom they try to kill in self-defence. These dreams reminded me of the "conception" dream of women in Central Australia in which the embryo was identified with a demon.<sup>56</sup> In this phase of the body destruction phantasy the corpse or embryo appears as the destroyer and instead of being annihilated it is he who annihilates. I allude to the famous texts which are inscribed on the walls and corridors of the chambers in the pyramid tombs of Unas, a king of the Vth Dynasty.

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<sup>53</sup> A. Moret, *op. cit.*, 38-50, 86.

<sup>54</sup> Cf. O. Rank, *Der Mythos von der Geburt des Helden*, 1922 (second edition).

<sup>55</sup> Plutarchos, *Der Iside et Osidie*, 14.

<sup>56</sup> Cf. G. Róheim, "Women and their life in Central Australia," *Journ. Roy. Anthr. Inst.*, XLIII, 1933, 207-265.



"The sky poureth down rain, the stars tremble, the bow-bearers run about with hasty steps. The bones of Akar tremble, and those who are ministrants unto them betake themselves unto flight when they see Unas rising like a god who liveth upon his fathers and feedeth upon his mothers. Unas is the lord of wisdom whose name his mother knoweth not. Unas weigheth his speech with the god whose name is hidden on the day of slaughtering the oldest (gods). Unas is the master of the offering and he tieth the knot and provideth meals for himself, he eateth men and he liveth upon gods he is the lord of offerings, and he keepeth count of the lists of the same."<sup>57</sup>

The gods upon whom Unas fed were bound by Her-thertu and the god Khensu cut their throats and took out their intestines. Thereupon Unas ate them and in eating them he also ate their words of power and their spirits. The largest and finest gods he ate at daybreak and the smaller sized ones for meals at sunset and the smallest for his meals in the night; the old and worn out gods he rejected entirely and used them up as fuel in his furnace.<sup>58</sup>

In the infantile phantasy world we find aggression and anxiety; in post-mortal reality, annihilation, in civilization, a colossal effort to deny what looks like a confirmation of infantile anxieties. Instead of the dead being eaten by an ordinary jackal, he eats the universe his father and mother and all the gods. He who has lost the company of all living beings, all that he loved, is represented as having eaten, *i.e.*, introjected the universe.

"Behold their soul (*i.e.*, the soul of the gods) is in Unas and their spirits are with him, his food is more abundant than that of the gods in whose bones is the flame of Unas. Behold their soul is with Unas and their Shadows are with their Forms, or Attributes. Unas, is in (or with) the doubly hidden *Kha* gods, as a *Sekhem* (Power) and having performed all the ordinances of the ceremony of ploughing the seat of the heart of Unas shall be among the living upon this earth for ever and ever."<sup>59</sup>

In China the souls of infants whose bodies have been mercilessly abandoned by their parents to decomposition in the open air, are doomed to eternal suffering.<sup>60</sup> In case the dead person does not close his eyes and mouth himself this is taken as a sure evidence that

<sup>57</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *The Gods of the Egyptians*, I, 32-35.

<sup>58</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *l. c.*, I, 38.

<sup>59</sup> E. A. Wallis Budge, *l. c.*, I, 39.

<sup>60</sup> I. I. M. de Groot, *The Religious System of China*, Vol. III, Book I, 1897, 13-89.



his departed soul feels uneasy about some matter. His wife, son, or another near relative will then try to comfort him by declaring in a coaxing tone of voice that there is nothing to depress his mind, everybody being sure to take the greatest care of his body and grave and to regularly sacrifice food and clothing to his soul for years and years to come.<sup>61</sup> In other words they reassure him against the loss he is about to suffer, the loss of the object. The organization and the series of institutions which constitute the Chinese cult of the dead and form the backbone of Chinese civilization, are in the main, efforts made against this supreme danger to deny separation and to protect continuity.

An essential point in the Chinese conception of Filial Piety is that the fathers death does not set the son free from all obligations of duty and reverence; it merely changes the outward form or expression of those obligations. He can no longer watch over his fathers physical welfare and anticipate his material wants but he can still bring peace and happiness to his fathers spirit by living an upright life and bringing glory and prosperity to the family.<sup>62</sup>

Few foreign residents in China, who have not made particular inquiries on the subject have any adequate idea of the amount of ancestral worship in this empire and the aggregate expense of such worship.<sup>63</sup>

At the time of erecting an ancestral hall, a permanent fund is established by the family or the families who unite in erecting it. The profits of this fund are designed to be used in defraying the expenses of the worship and sacrifices made at the appointed or customary times.<sup>64</sup>

The Buddhists in China celebrate a special mass for the repose of the soul and this ceremony is devoted to enriching the deceased with sacrificial offerings. All friends, kinsmen and admirers avail themselves of this opportunity to do homage to the deceased by presenting eulogic banners, eatables, paper money, etc.<sup>65</sup> The mass must be performed for the soul of the Catholic dead<sup>66</sup> and the Jew regards it as the most terrific curse if his son will not say the Kaddish (mortu-

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<sup>61</sup> de Groot, *l. c.*, Vol. I, Book I, 1892, 11.

<sup>62</sup> R. F. Johnston, *Lion and Dragon in Northern China*, 1910, 276.

<sup>63</sup> Rev. I. Doolittle, *Social Life of the Chinese*, 1866, I, 225.

<sup>64</sup> I. Doolittle, *l. c.*, 227.

<sup>65</sup> de Groot, *l. c.*, Vol. III, Book I, 1897, 1129.

<sup>66</sup> On the continuity of the dead and the living in Catholicism and Germanic lore, see H. Schreuer, "Das Recht der Toten," *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Rechtswissenschaft*, 1916, 16, 17.



ary prayer) for him. (Jewish folklore of today.) This continuity with the future is secured in India by procreating a son because the oblation to the manes can only be performed by the eldest son.<sup>67</sup> The soul is protected by the ceremonies performed by the son and therefore the wife who has given birth to a male child, a slave before this event, now suddenly becomes a personage of importance.<sup>68</sup> To die without issue is the most terrible curse among the Wadschagga because only a son can offer meat and bear to the ghost and without these offerings he is not admitted by the other manes into their company.<sup>69</sup>

### 3. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

We have compared neurosis and the sublimations which constitute the bulk of our civilization. In both cases we find the same defense mechanisms evolved on the basis of the infantile situation but while in neurosis the archaic objects are retained and the fate of the impulse must therefore be a frustration of some kind, the characteristic feature of a sublimation is that the impulse is carried over to a substitute object. The pleasure the child finds in playing with his excrements may pass on into adult life as an anal character, a compulsion neurosis, or as the basis of the sculptor's art. Neurosis separates the individual from his fellows and connects him with his own infantile images. Culture (sublimation) leads the libido into ego-syntonic channels by the creation of substitute objects. The most important of these substitutions is a human being, the wife who replaces the mother. The basis of society is formed by these substitutions and therefore the psychology of growing up falls, in many respects, in a line with the psychology of culture. Substitutes of another category—dolls, property, money, etc., in fact, material culture—are objects based on a withdrawal of libido from object love to a narcissistic position with a subsequent re-extroversion towards the object.

<sup>67</sup> W. Crooke, *The Popular Religion and Folk-Lore of Northern India*, 1896, I, 180.

<sup>68</sup> K. Mayo, *Mother India*, 1927, 79, 80.

<sup>69</sup> Y. Raum, "Blut und Speichelbünde bei den Wadschagga," *Archiv für Religionswissenschaft*, X, 289. Cf. Br. Gutmann, *Dichten und Denken der Dschagganeger*, 1909, 144, 145.



The theory of an "intermediate" object as stabilization between a trend that oscillates between "clinging" and "going exploring" in Hermann's sense, gains additional interest from Schilder's supplement to Hermann's theory. Schilder contrasts clinging not with a "seeking" impulse but with the tendency of maintaining one's position.

"It is a fact that children are uncommonly fond of every advance they make in physical equilibrium. They are insatiable in their demands to be swung, thrown, caught, or lifted in the air. If, however, they do not feel sufficiently secure in their possession of the love of adults, these games, as I was able to observe in one case, are accompanied by increased feelings of uncertainty. In favorable cases a child acquires the necessary confidence to enable him to maintain his posture and to avoid being left completely at the mercy of the forces of gravity. Thus we see that the child strives to make himself independent of others in preserving his equilibrium although he does not find it pleasant to renounce the libidinal gratification afforded by support and contact with his mother. At a further remove this satisfaction in securing his equilibrium leads to the child running away from the mother, a process which can be bound up with the acquisition of fresh objects to lean upon "(love objects)".<sup>70</sup>

Schilder's theory of equilibrium as the opposite of the grasping impulse would amount in libido terminology to a narcissistic cathexis of the body as opposed to the object directed trend. This narcissistic cathexis is a growth phenomenon. Now in the Aranda tribe we have "papa tjurungas" (stick tjurungas) *i.e.*, sticks put into the infant's cradle to protect him against the demons and promote growth. In the myth in which these infant ancestors walk on all fours or crawl around they are learning to walk erect by leaning on these stick tjurungas.<sup>71</sup> This is exactly Schilder's hypothesis—the erect posture (narcissistic position) and then a substitute object to "lean upon."

Although phylogenetic parallels are not fashionable nowadays one may safely assume that here at least there is a valid parallelism between the acquisition of the erect posture in the history of the race and the history of the individual.

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<sup>70</sup> P. Schilder, "The Relations Between Clinging and Equilibrium," *Int. Journ. of Psa.*, XX, 62.

<sup>71</sup> Field notes.



The erect posture has always been regarded as an important phase in the process of becoming human. The diminution in importance of olfactory stimuli seems itself, however, to be a consequence of man's erecting himself from the earth, of his adoption of an upright gait, which made his genitals, that before had been covered, visible and in need of protection and so evoked feelings of shame. Man's erect posture, therefore, would represent the beginning of a momentous process of cultural evolution.<sup>72</sup>

The erect posture is brought into connection with the cessation of arboreal life in various ways. It may have been promoted by the technique used in climbing trees with no branches.<sup>73</sup> It certainly had something to do with the transition from arboreal to terrestrial life.

It seems that our humanoid ancestors continued an arboreal or semi-arboreal existence as long as they could do so.<sup>74</sup>

Tree life was made impossible by an increase in body size and this is closely connected with the lengthening of the period of immaturity and the life cycle as a whole.<sup>75</sup> A delayed development makes for greater size.<sup>76</sup> Greater size in turn would have something to do with the change from arboreal to terrestrial life. I mention all this because we again see how the prolongation of infancy operates in explaining human development. The result is the erect stature and this phase of phylogenesis must have been marked by an increased libido cathexis of the body. From here the libido starts again in search of new objects and the result is that we have tools, things to hold in one's hand (grasping mother) and projections of one's own organs.<sup>77</sup>

The trend, from the infantile point of view, is from the nipple to thumb-sucking with a stop half-way. The great value of these objects as defense mechanisms lies in their dual aspect between object-love and narcissism; they are ego-syntonic and libidinal, social and

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<sup>72</sup> S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, 1930, 66.

<sup>73</sup> H. Klaatsch, *Der Werdegang der Menschheit und die Entstehung der Kultur*, 1920, 66.

<sup>74</sup> C. J. Warden, *The Emergence of Human Culture*, 1936, 83.

<sup>75</sup> C. J., *l. c.*, 84.

<sup>76</sup> Cf. R. Briffault, *The Mothers*, 1926, I, 96, 97.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. G. Noire, *Das Werkzeug und seine Bedeutung für die Entwicklungsgeschichte der Menschheit*, 1880.



individualistic, conductors of extrovert and introvert tendencies, a great security evolved by mankind against the danger of object loss, something that is a part of themselves and a representative of those whom they love. Thus they will never be left completely alone because failing everything else they have these children of their minds to love. And insofar as these objects correspond to or represent the same tendencies in others they form the libidinal basis of social co-operation.<sup>78</sup> Evolved as protections against the fancied dangers of an infantile mind, they become the tools used by our infantile species in its struggle with reality. The threatening event of object loss suffered by the infant in a series of separation traumas from the mother forms the basis of our fears regarding the final farewell. Here again we see the intimate connection between civilization and "grasping," separation is denied, the link between the dead and the living is maintained. Ancestral cult and civilization go together.<sup>79</sup>

From a paper by P. Heilbronner on paleolithic art we learn that Aurignacian sculpture mostly represented the female figure and in the same period we have also a considerable number of isolated representations of the vulva. As we proceed towards the Magdalenian period we see that the representation of female figures decreases both in quality and quantity and on the other hand we find a corresponding steady advance in the male figures and in the representations of the phallos.

At the same time as the development just mentioned was taking place the predominance was passing from sculptural to two dimensional forms of art, *i.e.*, away from the more concrete and tangible to the more abstract and visual.<sup>80</sup> The female figures in their most finished form in the Aurignacian give one the impression that the work represents a pregnant woman. The breasts hang down and the buttocks are very pronounced. Some of these statuettes possess one particularly interesting feature. The head runs into the point and if we look at the figure from the front we get the impression that this

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<sup>78</sup> The first libidinal basis being the displacement of the mother-child situation.

<sup>79</sup> It would be interesting to investigate whether this holds good also for the Sumerians or whether here the libidinal processes on which civilization was based were slightly different.

<sup>80</sup> P. Heilbronner, "Some Remarks on the Treatment of the Sexes in the Paleolithic Art," *Int. Journ. of Psa.*, XIX, 441.



form resembles a phallos; the breasts would then represent the testicles.<sup>81</sup> Phalloid representations seem to creep more and more into the statuettes and we also find a group of objects that show a combination of vulva and phallos.

Culture is *produced in the object-seeking trend* (the female statuettes) and *withdraws toward the narcissistic position* (representations of the male). From the viewpoint of the male artist the female statuette where the body as a whole can be equated with the phallos fits in very well with the definition of the cultural object as having a *Janus-like aspect, i.e., containing both libidinal positions, the narcissistic and the object-erotic*.

In Central Australia we find a civilization based on the puberty ritual. This is the backbone of society, of religion, of art. Now the puberty ritual is an institution that aims at diverting the libido of the boys from their mothers partly by offering them substitute mothers, women of their own with the approval of society and partly by offering them the fathers and their own selves as love objects. After initiation the importance of each individual is much enhanced for now he has a "second self", the tjurunga, a double which he worships and which is also worshipped by others. In its phallic significance with the concentric circles as vaginal ornament and in its narcissistic function as a guaranty for the well-being and immortality of the ego, it is a typical illustration of what we mean by a sublimation. The tjurunga is the symbol both of personal immortality (reincarnation) and of social cooperation. It is visible on the head of the performers, as a sublimated penis, at the ceremonies called mbatjalkatiuma. A *mbatjalkatiuma* is a ceremony at which the old people teach the young ones to perform the ancestral totemic drama, to do the *alknantama* (coitus movements) as the ancestors did in the days of yore. Actually the ceremony forms a powerful bond between the elder and the younger generation, teachers and pupils. Theoretically it unites both to the ancestors, the "eternal ones of the dream" (*altjiranga mitjina*). *Mbatjal katiuma* means *imbatja katirwuma*, i.e., the footsteps (of the ancestors) are renewed, their memory is not

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<sup>81</sup> P. Heilbrunner, l. c., 443. Cf. G. A. Barton, "The Paleolithic Beginnings of Religion," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 82, 1940, 131-149.



allowed to die.<sup>82</sup> And thus the primitive civilization of the Central Australian desert gives its members both the real security that lies in social cooperation and the security against object-loss, personal immortality. Considering moreover that the spirits are supposed either to dwell in perpetual youth in caves (uterine symbols) or to be re-incarnated, to re-enter a vagina and to find a new mother—our interpretation of animism and civilization as a defense against the danger of object loss becomes yet more evident.

We have repeatedly emphasized the fact that the material used in the formation of civilization is the libido. In previous publications I have stressed especially the aspects of this process which takes place under the dictatorship of the super-ego and at the expense of the Id.<sup>83</sup> Now however I am emphasizing another aspect of the question. Patients often suffer from an inhibition of sublimations. They cannot learn or work because their super-ego will not let them. This shows the libidinal gratification involved in these activities or compromise formations. This aspect of culture is clearly brought out by primitive culture-hero or fire-bringer myths. In these stories the culture-hero is not only mostly a son-hero who procures the constitutive elements of culture from a representative of the father by a revolutionary deed for which he is punished, as in the case of Prometheus, by the super-ego, but we also find, especially in North America, the Culture Bringer as Trickster, *i.e.*, as the prominent actor in a series of obscene episodes of an incestuous or anal character.<sup>84</sup> By obscene I mean that these episodes are regarded as obscene by the narrator.<sup>85</sup> Coyote, Raven, or Blue Jay may represent the libido both in its infantile and in its sublimated aspects.

By emphasizing the unifying or "clutching" aspects of civilization or of certain aspects of civilization which we are discussing, we have simply been saying that civilization is a product of the Eros.

<sup>82</sup> Cf. the chapter on "Central Australian Totemism" in G. Róheim, *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, 1934.

<sup>83</sup> Cf. especially *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, 1934, and "The Evolution of Culture," *Int. Journ. of Ps.*, XV, 387.

<sup>84</sup> Cf. S. Freud, "The Acquisition of Fire," *The Psychoanalytic Quarterly*, I, 1932, 210. G. Róheim, *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, 265. Ad. Kuhn, *Herabkunft des Feuers*, 1886. A. van Deussen, *Der Heilbringer*, 1931, J. G. Frazer, *Myths on the Origin of Fire*, 1930.

<sup>85</sup> Field work among the Yuma Indians.



As Freud has repeatedly pointed out it is the essence of the Eros to form ever larger units.<sup>86</sup> Why this should be so is not quite self-evident.<sup>87</sup> I think we can find the reason for this in our biological structure, in delayed maturation. For a retarded species, for a baby who cannot do without the nipple for a moment, the plasticity of the libido, the feasibility of displacements, in short, thumb sucking, has great survival value. Having learnt to accept substitute objects Eros remains only half-satisfied. Without giving up the desire to regain the original it is ever in search of new substitutes. In its eternal search the family, the tribe, and the nation are formed. But, and this seems to be the real tragedy of mankind, as the substitutes increase in quantity and area, they decrease in quality, they become more and more remote from a "good object," from a yielding nipple. As Lowie has shown<sup>88</sup> primitive man solves his simple task of living in a small society relatively well while civilized man living in great units has a far more difficult task and succeeds but poorly. It is doubtful whether anyone can have the same feelings for the community which he entertained as an infant for his mother. The difficulty of the task lies in the inadequacy of the object. Man is constitutionally attempting the impossible.

This explanation of civilization is borne out conclusively if we investigate the two primary elements of human culture. It will be universally admitted that these are the art of making fire and speech.

The fire drill is the male and the wood it penetrates into or rubs is the female. Thus the process of making fire is directly derived from adult object-relations, from coitus, as a play imitation of the real thing.<sup>89</sup> Speech is intimately connected with the oral zone that is with the infantile type of object-relations. The derivation of the magic power of the word, from the infantile situation has been

<sup>86</sup> Cf., for instance, S. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, 1930, 133.

<sup>87</sup> Eros unites lower organisms in copulation; but not in a series of super-organic unions.

<sup>88</sup> R. Lowie, *Are We Civilized?*, 1929.

<sup>89</sup> Cf. J. G. Frazer, *The Magic Art and the Evolution of Kings*, 1911, II, 208, 218, 233, 235, 239, 249, 195, 230. Idem, *Spirits of the Corn and the Wild*, 1912, II, 65. A. Kuhn, *Die Herabkunft des Feuers*, 1886. C. G. Jung, *Wandlungen und Symbole der Libido*, 1912, 48, 82, 108, 142, 269, 300. S. Freud, "Zur Gewinnung des Feuers," *Imago*, XVIII, 10. G. Róheim, *The Riddle of the Sphinx*, 1934, 268.



pointed out by Ferenczi, Malinowski and Briffault independently.<sup>90</sup> Now I was told by my informants in Normanby Island that in the language of magic, different grammatical forms are used because this is soft, tender talk, the way women and children speak. Thus we see how the magic of language was evolved on the basis of the magic of love. The two fundamental elements of human civilization are substitutes for object relations.

Civilization originates in delayed infancy and its function is security. It is a huge network of more or less successful attempts to protect mankind against the danger of object-loss, the colossal efforts made by a baby who is afraid of being left alone in the dark. The famous poem of Horace may be regarded as a symbol of this effort:

*Exegi monumentum, aere perennius  
Regalique situ pyramidum altius.*

Personal decay can not threaten him whose memory is more durable than metal and more exalted than the pyramids of Egypt.

*Non omnis moriar, multaque pars mei  
Vitabit Libitinam, usque ego postera  
Crescam laude recens, dum Capitolium  
Scandet cum tacita virgine pontifex.*

Horace Carminum, Lib. III, 30.

Death means new growth in identification with Rome as represented by the parental imagines (the virgin and the priest) and the praise, i.e., the love of posterity.

*Sume superbiam  
Quaesitam meritis et mihi Delphica  
Lauro cinge volens, Melpomene, comam.*

In the last lines we see the reflux of the libido from the mother and the re-invigoration of the Ego against the danger of the loss of the object.<sup>91</sup> Beloved by the Muse, the Mother Goddess, Man the Poet raises himself above Time and Reality with Delphic laurels.

<sup>90</sup> S. Ferenczi, "Stages in the Development of the Sense of Reality," *Psychoanalytic Review*, 1916; *Contributions to Psychoanalysis*, 1916. Br. Malinowski, *Coral Gardens and their Magic*, 1936. R. Briffault, *The Mothers*, I, 14.

<sup>91</sup> Cf. on obituary notices as last final defences against anxiety. J. Riviere, "Analysis of the negative therapeutic reaction." *Int. Journ. of Psa.*, XVII, 1936, 314.



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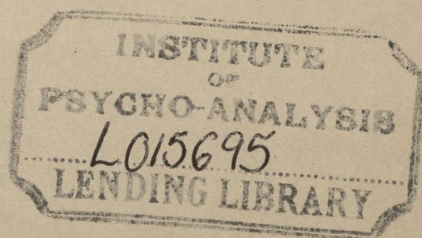


















# The Origin and Function of Culture

By

Géza Róheim, Ph. D.

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